SIEGFRIED

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A Play in Four Acts

By

JEAN GIRAUDOUX

English Version by

PHILIP CARR

LINCOLN MAC VEAGH
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CAST OF CHARACTERS
OF SIEGFRIED

As first produced by Louis Jouvet *at the Comédie des Champs-Elysées in Paris on May 3, 1928.*

Genevieve	Valentine Tessier
Eva	Lucienne Bogaert
Frau Patchkoffer	Gabrielle Calvi
Frau Hoepfl	Odette Mouret
Siegfried	Pierre Renoir
Baron von Zelten	Auguste Boverio
Robineau	Romain Bouquet
General de Fontgeloy	Louis Jouvet
General von Waldorf	Jim Gérald
General Ledinger	Delauzac
Pietri	Michel Simon
Muck	Paul Maraval
A Schupo	Alexandre Rignault
Kratz	Robert Moor
Meyr	Vallauris

Herr Schmidt. Herr Patchkoffer. Herr Keller. The Sergeant of the Schupos. Schuman. A Servant.

The first, second and third acts take place in the house of Siegfried, and the fourth in a frontier railway station.

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ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE: *A comfortably furnished waiting-room of an official building. Through large open windows at the back is seen a view of the town of Gotha, covered with snow. Statues and other works of art in the latest German Style indicate that the action passes in Germany of today. As the curtain rises Eva is discovered writing, and there is a doorkeeper at the door. Enter* MUCK *and a* SERVANT.

MUCK

General Ludendorff.

EVA

Not now. This evening at nine o'clock.

MUCK

His Excellency, President Rathenau.

EVA

This evening at nine o'clock. You know quite well that Herr Siegfried will see no one on public business this afternoon.

MUCK

[*To the* SERVANT.] Mine are no good. Call out yours.

SERVANT

Herr Meyr.

EVA

Yes. Councillor Siegfried will see him shortly.

SERVANT

Herr Kratz. Frau Schmidt.

EVA

Very good. They are punctual. Herr Siegfried will see them all.

MUCK

Waste of time.

EVA

Your opinion is not asked.

MUCK

Herr Siegfried is only putting a useless strain upon his feelings. [EVA *does not answer and goes on writing.* MUCK *speaks aside to the* SERVANT.] I have cast my eye over all these supposed relations. They have come from every corner of Germany and they hope that when they see him they will recognise a son whom they lost in the war. Not one of them is in the least like him.

SERVANT

Ah?

MUCK

No doubt you will say that likenesses are like illnesses. They miss a generation.

SERVANT

Yes, perhaps I shall.

MUCK

I have looked at all the photographs which they show at the door, the photographs of their lost children—their entrance cards in fact. One has spectacles. Another looks as if he had a hare lip. Not one of them is like Herr Siegfried.

SERVANT

Perhaps you are not very good at seeing likenesses.

MUCK

Indeed, I am. When I go to museums and theatres, when I look at pictures and statues, whether they are in ancient costume or entirely naked, whether it is Alexander the Great or Lohengrin, I never fail to see some resemblance to Herr Siegfried in his frock coat. In these people I see no resemblance at all. You know Lohengrin?

SERVANT

More or less. I have seen him.

EVA

[*Interrupting their talk.*] Is everything ready for the reception?

MUCK

The chandelier is repaired. I have put in the new lamps.

EVA

Is Herr Siegfried dressed?

MUCK

He is dressing now. [*He turns to the* SERVANT.] He seems to be hesitating. He has not decided whether he will cut his moustache as he did last time. He was looking in the mirror when I left him. He is no doubt wondering how he would be most like what they remember. Putting on the appearance of his boyhood is a longer business than choosing a suit of clothes.

EVA

Show in Baron von Zelten.

MUCK

[*Surprised.*] I did not give the name of Baron von Zelten.

EVA

You should have given it. I told you not to let him in. Why did you disobey me? Why do you allow him to mix with our visitors and to question them?

MUCK

I thought I was doing right. After all, he is your cousin, Fraülein.

EVA

Never mind. Disturbing things are being said about him. He is always very busy, making himself important, wherever there is a crowd—in beer halls, in theatres, in

bathing places. It is said that he has bought over the police, and that no longer ago than last night he had a meeting of them at his house.

MUCK

That is not true. He merely gave them theatre tickets. They were all at *Salome* to see what uniforms were worn by Herod's guards.

EVA

That will do, I will see him.

[MUCK *and the* SERVANT *go out.* MUCK *returns to show in* ZELTEN.]

EVA

What are you doing here, Zelten?

ZELTEN

I see you are still on guard over your pupil. Has he come back from Parliament?

EVA

Are you for us or against us, Zelten?

ZELTEN

Yes, he has come back, I can see it by your face, and he has told you of his success. You are beaming, my dear cousin. If the cheeks of a pretty German woman can flush with joy when our deputies adopt so very meagre a constitution, I cannot help feeling a little less severe towards her.

EVA

A German woman has a right to rejoice when she sees Germany saved. After having been obliged to talk of Germany as lost for the last three years, there is some joy in being able to change the adjective for its opposite.

ZELTEN

Opposites are just the adjectives which are the most easily interchangeable, my dear cousin, especially when Germany is in question. You wished to speak to me?

EVA

Why have you just voted against the Siegfried plan?

ZELTEN

The Siegfried plan! One would think that I had voted against the Walkyries and all the Gods of the German Mythology. It was your pleasure seven years ago to give the name of Siegfried to a soldier in your hospital, who had been picked up unconscious and unclothed, and who has never been able to recover either his memory nor even his real name, at any moment during his triumphant political career; and now you behave as though the prestige belonging to the name, which you have given him, also belongs to everything that he can do or say. Who knows whether your Siegfried was not called Meyr before he was wounded? And in that case I have simply voted against the Meyr plan.

EVA

Is that all you have come to say in his own house?

ZELTEN

[*Changing the subject.*] Last time I saw you, Eva, six years ago, was at the Institut of Re-education, and you were teaching this grown-up baby the simplest words—dog, cat, milk. Today it is from him that you are yourself learning to pronounce the delicious words of constitution, liberalism, plural vote—perhaps the word love. Am I right?

EVA

The word Germany.

ZELTEN

The Germany of your Siegfried. I can see it coming. A model Social State. Oh, yes, and the suppression of those thirty kingdoms, of those duchies, of those free towns in which culture and liberty sprang from the soil and struck thirty different kinds of genuine note. A model country, neatly divided up into Departments of equal size, a country whose only adventures will be budgets, insurances and pensions—in short, a nation made up of theories like himself, without a memory and without a past. This child of nothingness has merely inherited the soul of an accountant, of a lawyer, of a watchmaker. To force the constitution of your pupil on Germany is to make the Dragon of Siegfried, the real Siegfried, swallow an alarm-clock in order to find out what time it is.

EVA

Siegfried will help Germany to become strong.

ZELTEN

It is not the business of Germany to be strong. It is her business to be German—or rather to be strong on the ideal plane, a giant in the unseen. Germany is not a social and human business concern, but a poetic and vital confederacy. Every time that Germans have tried to mould her into a practical construction, their work has collapsed within a generation. Every time that they have placed their faith in the genius of their country to transform every great thought and every great action into a symbol or a legend, then they have built for eternity.

EVA

That eternity is finished.

ZELTEN

Finished, Eva? Instead of trotting Siegfried around model suburbs, just take him down to the first bastion of our Alps. Go there with him, and wait for the dawn. There you will see whether the Germany of the Holy Roman Empire is not still living in the frozen air, at that hour when the brooks, bordered with ice, mark the ruts of a woodland road, where one can still meet men and beasts who have not changed since the time of Gustavus Adolphus—weasels, pie-bald horses, yellow post-chaises, and postmen blowing horns which make the peasant girl half open the shutters and lean her right cheek and her right shoulder out into the morning. You will see there the real country of robbery and of

saintliness, so saturated both with poetry and with truth that you might expect suddenly to see, as it might be in a mediaeval woodcut, a rosy little naked cherub coming down from the sky, or perhaps just a pair of hands praying from behind the cloud—that is Germany.

EVA

I am very busy, what do you want?

ZELTEN

I want to see Siegfried.

EVA

Why?

ZELTEN

That is my business.

EVA

He can't see anyone—at least not you.

ZELTEN

Is he resting?

EVA

Do not pretend that you do not know quite well what he is getting ready to do.

ZELTEN

I can guess it. He is shaving. He is putting on a clean collar. He is brushing his hair. To prepare himself for this ceremony, which is perhaps to give him a name and a family, as he thinks, he is dressing up as if he were going to the scaffold. Is he not discouraged by so many failures? Does he still hope?

EVA

He still hopes, if you don't mind.

ZELTEN

And you, do you still hope?

EVA

Of course.

ZELTEN

That is not quite true.

EVA

Zelten!

ZELTEN

Do not deceive yourself. You would be in despair, if the day came when one of these visitors were to take away your pupil from the ideal state in which you have kept him and were to make him into no more than a Bavarian or a vulgar Prussian. What a father for this German, born out of nothing! This German whom every one of the virgins of Germany has already recognised as being her legitimate child— There is nothing to prove, by the way, that he is not acting a part in the matter himself.

EVA

You must be mad.

ZELTEN

His mystery is the very foundation of Siegfried's popularity. The man whom Germany considers to be her saviour, the man who pretends to be her personifica-

tion, was suddenly born six years ago in an army dressing station, without memory, without papers, and without luggage. Peoples are very like children. They imagine that great men came into the world by train; and at the bottom Germany is very flattered to think that her hero is not the issue of the not necessarily holy union of a middle-class couple. A jurist who is born in the same way that a poet dies, there is a romantic idea for you! His loss of memory has given your Siegfried every possible past, every possible family, and also—what is still more necessary in a modern statesman—every possible plebeian one. If he finds his real family or his memory he will at last become our equal. I confess that I hope and I have good reasons for hoping that this moment is not far distant.

EVA

What do you mean?

ZELTEN

The short circuit which removed Siegfried from his real life may be repaired by a very unexpected kind of workman.

EVA

What do you know about Siegfried? Be careful, Zelten.

MUCK

[*Enter* MUCK.]

Fraülein, it is time for the reception.

EVA

I will go upstairs. Show Herr von Zelten out. [*Exit* EVA.]

MUCK

[*Aside to* ZELTEN.] Nothing changed for tomorrow, Herr Baron?

ZELTEN

No, Muck.

MUCK

At what time?

ZELTEN

At the end of the afternoon. The signal will be two cannon shots. Now listen to me, Muck, there will be a ring at the door in a moment. You will see two foreigners. They are French. You know how to recognise Frenchmen when they travel?

MUCK

Of course, by their morning coats and their bowler hats.

ZELTEN

You must see that they are allowed to come in. The success of tomorrow's business depends upon them. You have no objection to talking to Frenchmen?

MUCK

Why should I? In the trenches, when we were not attacking them, we sometimes chatted with the French. It is difficult not to say a word when one has not said

a word for months at a time. Our officers were not very full of conversation with us, you know. Our families were far away. We only had the French—I understand. I will hide them.

ZELTEN

Do not do anything of the sort. Let them wait in this room. By the way, one of the Frenchmen is a Frenchwoman. Let me know as soon as they are here. As soon as I have seen them, tell Siegfried that a Canadian school teacher asks him to receive her. [*A bell.*] Is that someone ringing?

MUCK

I must call the sorrowing relatives. Herr Siegfried is coming down.

ZELTEN

I will see you again later, then.

[MUCK *opens a door and shows in the relatives, who are a variegated and mournful crowd.*]

MUCK

Herr Municipal Architect Schmidt.

SCHMIDT

Here.

MUCK

You can put down your hat, Herr Municipal Architect.

SCHMIDT

I would sooner hold it. It is a pre-war hat. I have put on the clothes I used to wear then.

MUCK

As you please. Frau Hoepfl, independent means.

FRAU HOEPFL

Here I am.

MUCK

Have you brought your letter of invitation?

FRAU HOEPFL

I showed it to you with the photograph.

MUCK

Yes, to be sure. The one with the hare lip. I mean the one with a slight defect in the upper lip. Herr Bookbinder Keller.

KELLER

Here. My sight is not so good as it was, Sir. So I took the liberty of bringing Herr Kratz, our neighbour the chemist, who was very fond of Franz.

KRATZ

[*Introducing himself with a humble bow.*] First-class Apothecary Kratz.

KELLER

Herr Kratz used to spoil him. In that pharmacy there was more sweetmeats made for Kratz than medicines. Indeed, one of them has since become a well-known cure.

KRATZ

[*Bowing.*] Kratz Apple-Sugar. I have brought a packet of it for Herr Siegfried. To give him in any case. I shall not take it back.

MUCK

Frau and Herr Patchkoffer. [*A peasant and his wife approach.*] I wrote to you, Frau Patchkoffer. It did not seem to me that there was much reason for your journey. You said in your letter that your son was small and dark. Herr Siegfried is tall and fair.

HERR PATCHKOFFER

We saw some dark ones in Berlin at the Re-education Hospital.

KELLER

But the height?

FRAU PATCHKOFFER

But we saw all the small ones too, did not we, Patchkoffer?

MUCK

Very good, very good.

FRAU PATCHKOFFER

If he had not greatly changed we should have found him long ago.

MUCK

Herr Meyr.

MEYR

Here. Will you please tell me what happens, Sir?

MUCK

What happens? Don't you worry. It will go quite quickly. You will all stand in this recess. Herr Siegfried will come down this staircase, a chandelier will be lit over his head. Those who are short-sighted can step up nearer. Those who are doubtful may even touch him. And, at the end of five minutes, if you will allow me to say so, you will all go away disappointed. At least, that is what has happened every time until now; but, of course, I wish you all better luck.

MEYR

Thank you. Indeed I can hardly say that I have much hope of recognising my poor dear Ernest in the person of the first man of the land; for he was a lovable child, but he was always at the bottom of his class, and although everybody liked him, he always seemed to be getting into trouble with his schoolmasters. To find him in the man who has become in a few months the most popular figure in Germany . . . No, I can hardly say I have much hope. Is his hair curly, Sir?

[*A bell is heard.*]

MUCK

Please walk in here, Ladies and Gentlemen.

[*The relatives go into a room on the left,* MUCK *goes to open the door, and introduces* GENEVIEVE *and* ROBINEAU, *after which he goes out.*]

GENEVIEVE

Where on earth are we, Robineau?

ROBINEAU

We have passed the twelve hundred and fiftieth kilometre from Paris. Guess, Genevieve.

GENEVIEVE

It is terribly cold. The only thing I can guess is that we are certainly not at Nice. Where are we?

ROBINEAU

You can see the whole town from this window. Look. I will explain the prospect to you. What can you see?

GENEVIEVE

It is certainly not Nice. I can see on my right a fortress with watch towers, banners and drawbridges.

ROBINEAU

[*Looking towards the audience and speaking as if from memory.*] That is the National Museum.

GENEVIEVE

I see before me a Greek Temple surrounded by cedars and all covered in snow.

ROBINEAU

That is the Orpheum.

GENEVIEVE

On my left, there is a square building of ten stories with a lot of little windows in the shape of unicorns.

ROBINEAU

[*Rhapsodically.*] That is the Panoptikum.

GENEVIEVE

And then, in the immediate foreground, a Florentine Palace with frescoes and arcades.

ROBINEAU

The palace of Maximilian.

GENEVIEVE

The Maximilianeum, no doubt.

ROBINEAU

Quite right.

GENEVIEVE

[*Turning round.*] Where are we, Robineau?

ROBINEAU

Why, in Gotha, Genevieve, we are in Gotha. This is the town where I made friends with Zelten, fifteen years ago. It was during the Carnival. He was dressed as a Zulu. I was Alcibiades. Consequently there was no national prejudice at the base of our immediate sympathy.

GENEVIEVE

What were you doing in Gotha?

ROBINEAU

What were the only Frenchmen who came to Germany before the war doing? We are all philologists. I was taking part in that raid of twelve undergraduates of the Sorbonne whom France hurled victoriously against the Saxon dialects on the very morrow of Agadir. I am one of the twelve Frenchmen who are quoted in all the

German histories of the middle ages. As for their histories of modern times, you can search in vain for the names of twelve French generals.

GENEVIEVE

And whom have we come to see in this house?

ROBINEAU

I really don't know. Anyhow, there is someone coming.

[*The door opens and the relatives come in again. They walk sadly. They sadly exchange greetings.*]

GENEVIEVE

I am afraid, Robineau.

ROBINEAU

Afraid? Afraid of what?

GENEVIEVE

Of being here— Of having left my rue du Bac so suddenly last night, and of being here.

ROBINEAU

What have you to fear? Zelten arranged for us to have Canadian passports. If you have a feeling that anybody is looking at you suspiciously, talk a little Canadian French. Call an orchestra a band and a dining car a refectory. I can supply you with a little list of those barbarisms. Are you cold? You are trembling.

GENEVIEVE

In Canada, the cold does not make us tremble. I am afraid, Robineau.

ROBINEAU

I don't believe it. You are the bravest woman I know.

GENEVIEVE

No doubt. But it is just the kind of fear that a brave woman can feel that makes me afraid. I lay awake all night in the sleeping car, blaming myself for having allowed you to persuade me to come.

ROBINEAU

Every day for several days, Zelten has sent me at least twenty telegrams begging me to find you and to bring you willy-nilly today to this house. He has been spending three francs a word to assure you that what you care for most in the world is at stake. He declares that the very future of Franco-German relations may depend upon your coming. Now Franco-German relations are a very important matter to a man like myself, who has made a special study of the aspirate "ch" in the dialects of the Rhine Valley. Now, what do you care for most in the world?

GENEVIEVE

In this world, nothing. Since the death of Jacques, since the disappearance of my world, nothing. Indeed, that is why I did what you asked me.

ROBINEAU

Then, why are you afraid?

GENEVIEVE

This is the first time in my life, I think, that I have the sensation of receiving a message.

ROBINEAU

And yet, you have had your share of trouble.

GENEVIEVE

Until now my troubles have at least come to me in silence. I never knew my parents; and it was only the silence of my childhood, that very silence, the uninterrupted telegrams of that silence, which told me that I was an orphan. I loved Jacques Forestier. At the very beginning of the war, he was reported missing. Never once during the last seven years have I received any word from him, or any indication of his death. This is the first time that Fate has deigned to take notice of me and to warn me. I am afraid— By the way, you don't seem to be very comfortable yourself, Robineau.

ROBINEAU

To be frank, I am not.

GENEVIEVE

What is the matter?

ROBINEAU

The matter is, Genevieve, that for the first time since the war I am about to see a German friend again, to take a German friend by the hand. It is seven years since I knew this aspect of friendship. I am wondering what it will be like.

GENEVIEVE

Were you fond of him, your German friend?

ROBINEAU

Zelten is not quite what you call your German friend, unless it is perhaps true to say that he is the only surviving German. He has all the resonant and flamboyant defects which we French attributed to the Germans before eighteen seventy—fair hair, an equal instinct for encouraging high-sounding and preposterous schemes and for avoiding reality. An exaggerated and sincere emphasis, and in fact all sorts of characteristics which we shall have to attach to some other nation if the Germans go on burning our towns and shaving their polls. Did not you see Zelten at Montparnasse? For a sculptor like you he would have been a fine model.

GENEVIEVE

A fine model? He seemed to have a rib missing as far as one could judge from his walk.

ROBINEAU

Ah, yes. He broke it by diving into the Rhine at the point where Schumann committed suicide.

GENEVIEVE

He had one ankle larger than the other.

ROBINEAU

He twisted it in jumping from the rock from which Ludwig of Bavaria had thrown himself. You see he wanted, as he explained to me, to realize the sensation of

the last moments in the lives of all the great men of Germany. If he has a broken nose or a twisted shoulder blade when you meet him again, it will no doubt be the fault of Wagner or Frederick Barbarossa.

GENEVIEVE

Unless it is a French bullet.

ROBINEAU

Don't suggest that, Genevieve. Don't weight down with lead all those great shadows which will be moving around us.

GENEVIEVE

Shadows? What shadows?

ROBINEAU

You can take your choice from Vercingetorix to Blücher.

GENEVIEVE

In that case, Robineau, perhaps I had better leave you alone for this first meeting. I saw a sofa in the next room, and I am dead tired. Call me if I am wanted.

ROBINEAU

Run away, then. Here he is.

[*Exit* GENEVIEVE. Enter ZELTEN. *The two men stand looking at each other for a moment.*]

ZELTEN

Here we are.

ROBINEAU

Here we are.

ZELTEN

Is it really you, Robineau, Hippolyte Amable?

ROBINEAU

Otto-Wilhelmus von Zelten-Buchenbach, it is I.

ZELTEN

Is it you, dark-skinned, brachicephalous Celt, with too many spectacles and too many woollen waistcoats, but terrible in the assault?

ROBINEAU

Yes, Cream of Kultur, Glutton of Carnage, Son of Arminius. It is I.

ZELTEN

I have a feeling that we are talking to one another on the telephone a long distance away, Robineau. And the slightest thing would cut the current. Hold your end of the line. I can see you, nevertheless. You have not changed.

ROBINEAU

Nor have you. But what have you been doing all these twelve years, Zelten? You who used to be so fond of the spring, of music, of joy, of peace. What have you been doing?

ZELTEN

War. War against thirty-five nations, but the real fight against a single one. And you, the spectacle wearer; the peaceful democrat of royal and imperial libraries. You who were my dearest friend; what have you been doing all these twelve years?

ROBINEAU

War. Against you.

ZELTEN

Happily we are both clumsy shots, Robineau. We missed each other. Were you aiming at me?

ROBINEAU

Several times, when we attacked, I thought of you; and I lifted my rifle and fired at the heavens.

ZELTEN

You must have missed them too. For they go on making the same mistakes at least as far as Germany is concerned. But to tell you the truth, I felt sure that you did not feel too bitter towards the man who had been your friend. Every time that a bullet missed me I said to myself: "There is good old Robineau firing again." As for the bullets which hit things that in no way concerned them, such as bottles and pears hanging on the trees, I could not help thinking that those must be yours too, for that is just what you used to do with your words. One day the corporal of my section was hit in the buttock. Everyone laughed. But I thought of you— [*He comes nearer and suddenly changes to a deliberately more familiar tone.*] How are you, Robineau?

ROBINEAU

How are you, Zelten?

ZELTEN

Things going pretty well with you?

ROBINEAU

Not so badly, and with you?
[*A pause.*]

ZELTEN

What are you doing now?

ROBINEAU

I am just finishing my treatise on the dental consonants.

ZELTEN

Still a philologist? The call of war has not distracted your attention from our little languages.

ROBINEAU

But tell me. Why have you sent for me? What do you want? What are you doing?

ZELTEN

What am I doing? I am going on. In Germany, we are going on. We are at war.

ROBINEAU

War?

ZELTEN

Not the same one, civil war. I am fighting against the real enemies of Germany. Countries are like fruits. Their maggots are always inside.

ROBINEAU

Oh! You are engaged in propaganda, you make speeches.

ZELTEN

Not at all. I am making a revolution. Today is the twelfth of January nineteen twenty-one. I am making the Revolution of the Thirteenth or Fourteenth of January nineteen twenty-one. It is indeed in connection with this political event that I have called in your help. You have arrived at the last moment, but you are indispensable to me nevertheless.

ROBINEAU

I wonder. I have always noticed that when I am there, historic events never come off. History seems to regard me with suspicion, as if I had taken my First in that subject instead of in grammar.

ZELTEN

Just you stay in Gotha for three days. You will see something happen. That is, if you have brought Genevieve with you; it is not only you that I want. I want Genevieve. Particularly Genevieve. Is she here?

ROBINEAU

Yes, she is resting. I made her start in the middle of the night. She must be asleep now.

ZELTEN

Was she not upset at being waked up like that?

ROBINEAU

She is the kind of person who is never upset. But there is an epidemic of influenza in Paris, and she is a

sculptor. She had been waked up three nights running to take casts of the hands or heads of famous persons.

ZELTEN

It is for something of the kind that I have sent for her.

ROBINEAU

What! Somebody who is dead?

ZELTEN

Somebody who is both dead and alive. Have you ever heard of our Siegfried?

ROBINEAU

Councillor Siegfried? To be sure I have; as has everyone in Europe. He is your new great man. He is to present Germany with her model constitution, with her clearly defined soul, so his admirers say.

ZELTEN

And Forestier? You know Forestier?

ROBINEAU

The French writer. The lost friend of Genevieve? I was only just talking to her about him. I only know his work. A fine work too. His ambition was to give back to our language and to our life the mystery and the tenderness which they once had. How right he was! Each time that I read the *Roman de la Rose*, I am more and more convinced of it. To bring back poetry to France, to bring back logic to Germany—the task is much the same.

ZELTEN

And being carried out by the same man.

ROBINEAU

What do you mean?

ZELTEN

Siegfried was found naked, without memory, and without speech in a pile of wounded. I strongly suspect that Siegfried and Forestier are one and the same man.

ROBINEAU

My dear Zelten! Great men, when they die, change their planet; but they do not change their country.

ZELTEN

You don't know how to look, but you do know how to read. If you had been Saint Thomas, you would have been convinced not by the hands of Jesus, but by his autograph. Well then! You have read the works of Forestier, read those of Siegfried. The latter are simply copies of the former. The inspiration, the style, even the expressions are the same.

ROBINEAU

Plagiarism is at the root of all literatures—except the earliest of them; which, by the way, is lost.

ZELTEN

Oh! You French philologists. What German philologists you are. I wanted to tame you quicker by using scientific arguments; but, as a matter of fact, it was not by scientific methods that I arrived at the truth.

ROBINEAU

I can quite believe it. No doubt you reached it by the more ordinary but not less successful method of an anonymous letter.

ZELTEN

Precisely! An anonymous visitor told me that Siegfried had been in the next bed to his in the hospital, and that he was not a German. This visitor had even read the name on an identity disc that he found in the stretcher. It was Jacques Forestier. Now you can understand my joy.

ROBINEAU

Perfectly. It was really a bit of luck to change a statesman whom you hate into a writer whom you like.

ZELTEN

It is an even greater bit of luck to hand over to a mother country a great man who is a nuisance to your own. I have made my enquiries; but I need the final proof today, and in a few minutes, our minds will be relieved.

ROBINEAU

Our minds, Zelten? Whose mind? Do you mean the mind of Genevieve? Think of what you are doing.

ZELTEN

[ZELTEN *has rung a bell and* MUCK *comes in*] Muck, tell the Herr Councillor Siegfried that the Canadian school teacher asks him to receive her. [MUCK *bows and goes up the small private staircase which is seen*

to the left of the stage.] There you are. Now we have nothing to do but wait. Siegfried adores members of foreign universities, specially those from America. He asks them all sorts of questions about their methods of teaching, about prison regulations, about co-education. The bait will be irresistible, and in a few moments he will come down to see Genevieve.

ROBINEAU

Come down? Why come down?

ZELTEN

We are in his house. He is up there on the first floor. Call Genevieve.

ROBINEAU

Certainly not, we must prepare them. You can kill a sleepwalker, if you call out his name, even in a foreign tongue.

[GENEVIEVE *appears at the door.*]

ZELTEN

You need not call her, there she is. The characters in the drama of Fate obey their destiny without being sent for.

GENEVIEVE

Tell me, Monsieur de Zelten, what is the matter?

ZELTEN

May we speak to you on a subject which will give you the greatest pain, the greatest sadness?

GENEVIEVE

[*Turning to* ROBINEAU.] Ah!

ROBINEAU

Yes.

GENEVIEVE

Of Jacques?

ZELTEN

Yes. Of Forestier. May we speak to you of him? Will it make you suffer too much?

GENEVIEVE

No. Speak of Forestier. Has his body been found? Am I wanted to identify it? What have I said, Monsieur de Zelten? Why do you look at me like that?

ZELTEN

I am always touched when I see a human being approach a grave moment with the voice and the gestures which befit it.

GENEVIEVE

Yes. I know. I have been told so. I have all the attributes for receiving with dignity the news of the death of my son or of my mother or the fraudulent bankruptcy of my father. The misfortune, the real misfortune, is that I have never known either parents or children. Tragedy has never succeeded in enrolling me among her followers. I should be a Phèdre who has no handsome son, no husband and no scruples, a *Phèdre* without a care. There is not much that Fate can do to me.

ZELTEN

What about Forestier?

GENEVIEVE

Yes, even about Forestier. We were lovers for two years, from nineteen twelve till nineteen fourteen. You would have thought that it is upon me that would have fallen the responsibility and the anxiety of following his dangers during the war, of supporting the sorrow of his death, of inheriting his glory. But of course, it was destined that nothing so definite should happen to me. We quarrelled a month before the war. Just that little, little quarrel prevented me from quarrelling with life, from being in mourning; for every mourner has at the base of his sorrow a happiness which was never mine.

ZELTEN

Why did you not make it up with him at the beginning of the war?

GENEVIEVE

I was counting, he was counting upon his first five days of leave. Now we must both count upon the religions which promise a future life. In any case, I have always avoided official functions. I was born a natural child. I should have hated to be a widow.

ZELTEN

He is not dead. He is only missing.

GENEVIEVE

Not even quite missing. For the great men whose bones have been swallowed by the earth, and have been

given back by the earth in the form of marble to so many places in their countries, are not missing. His head in granite is in a square at Limoges, and his right hand in alabaster holds a leaf of laurel at Orleans.

ZELTEN

He is missing. He has disappeared; but he can appear again.

GENEVIEVE

You can well believe that that is what I sometimes say to myself.

ZELTEN

Have you never had any presentiment of it?

GENEVIEVE

Never. Nothing. I never see him in my dreams. He is never with me when I am sleepless. He has never sent me any of these messages which sometimes come from the dead.

[*A door is heard to open on the first floor.*]

ZELTEN

And supposing he came back. Supposing he suddenly walked downstairs, by that staircase there?

GENEVIEVE

[*Smiling.*] I have quarrelled with him.

[*The voice of* SIEGFRIED *is heard.*]

ZELTEN

Listen.

GENEVIEVE

What? What do you mean? But that is the voice of Jacques. [*The voice stops.*] Whose voice was it?

ZELTEN

The voice of the man who lives in this house; Herr Councillor Siegfried.

GENEVIEVE

[*Running to the staircase and calling.*] Jacques! [*She comes back to them.*] What does it mean?

ROBINEAU

Zelten thinks he has found out that Siegfried, who was found wounded and with his memory gone, is the same man as Forestier.

[SIEGFRIED *is heard above opening the door.*]

GENEVIEVE

Who is that coming down?

ZELTEN

It is he. It is Siegfried.

GENEVIEVE

[*She dares not look and she is speaking to herself.*] That is not his step. Or if it is, he is carrying a heavy load. Yes, it is his step, as it was when he used to carry me. What can he be carrying that is heavier than I? Yes, that is his voice. That is his shadow. [SIEGFRIED *appears.*] It is he.

[ZELTEN *goes out delighted.*]

ROBINEAU

Don't say a word, it might kill him. [*He retreats to the back of the stage.*]

GENEVIEVE

Oh, what a way to dress, Jacques.

[SIEGFRIED *opens the big door for* EVA, *who has followed him down the staircase, and she goes out. He then walks straight up to* GENEVIEVE *who has retreated and bows to her in the German manner, slightly clicking his heels.*]

SIEGFRIED

[*Introducing himself.*] Secretary of State Siegfried. [GENEVIEVE *slightly bows.*] I thought you were an old, old lady. I hardly dare tell you of my proposal. [GENEVIEVE *is still looking at him.*] I have not made a mistake, have I? You are the French Canadian lady, whose name has just been brought to me? [GENEVIEVE *nods.*] I hope you understand me. I know that my French does not run easily. It is not very free. It is in fact on account of it, that I am venturing to speak to you. I should like to take some lessons. Every evening about six o'clock, I give myself an hour rest. Would you do me the service of coming at that time? We might begin tomorrow.

ROBINEAU

[*Aside to her.*] Accept.

[GENEVIEVE *nods slowly.*]

SIEGFRIED

I hope it is not a dumb lady that is to give me my lessons.

ROBINEAU

Have no fear, Sir; but she is hesitating.

SIEGFRIED

The lady is your wife? I beg your pardon.

ROBINEAU

Oh, no. The lady is a friend. But she has never given any lessons. She is wondering whether she is capable of doing so. You see Canadian French is in many respects different from real French. For instance, in Quebec, we call a tramway a char. An overcoat, we call—

SIEGFRIED

What do you call snow?

ROBINEAU

Snow? We say snow. But why snow?

SIEGFRIED

And winter?

ROBINEAU

Winter? Why, just like summer. What I mean to say is that the seasons have the same names as in France.

SIEGFRIED

Then that will do quite well. I do not need any more precise vocabulary than that. Never mind if I acquire a Quebec accent. Life is becoming specialised

to such an exaggerated point that I need very general common conversations as a rest, conversations on very general subjects. Canadian French and Canada with her great rivers, her great winters, and her great summers, are just what I want. And silence, Mademoiselle, how do you say silence, in Canada?

GENEVIEVE

[*Slowly.*] How do you say it in German?

SIEGFRIED

Stillo! Silentium!

GENEVIEVE

We say silence.

SIEGFRIED

How the words which come to us from a new and open country sound themselves open and pure!

ROBINEAU

I beg your pardon. They are French words after all.

SIEGFRIED

French words no doubt. But when they come from your mouth, they have made a journey into the unknown. The word snow has never meant in France as much snow as in Canada. You have taken from France a word which she used no more than a few days a year, and you have made it the lining of the whole of your language.

GENEVIEVE

Till tomorrow, then. [*She now speaks very quickly.*] What a way to dress, Jacques!

SIEGFRIED

You are speaking to me? You know I understand very badly when you speak as quickly as that.

GENEVIEVE

How quickly must I speak to you tomorrow?

SIEGFRIED

Let us try. Will you just recite a speech from some well-known play? I will tell you when I cannot understand any more. We will gradually increase the speed.

GENEVIEVE

[*At first slowly and at last very quickly.*] At the approach of spring, when the first lime-trees on the boulevard Saint-Germain opened their leaves, we used to come down, we two, about five o'clock; and we stopped at the café de Cluny. You would order a Chambéry and syrup. At six o'clock, you would go to the office of the *Action Française*, where you would write a royalist article on the debate in the Chamber, and I would go and fetch you at the *Lanterne* office at eight, where you had just finished your socialist article on the debate in the Senate. Then we would dine. Then we would go to bed. Then we would wake up again. That was two years of our life, Jacques.

SIEGFRIED

A shade quick. I understand the words, not the sense entirely. The speech is long. Is it from a tragedy or from a comedy?

GENEVIEVE

Both sorts are mixed in the modern drama, you know.

SIEGFRIED

Till tomorrow, Mademoiselle. I feel assured that we shall find the right medium for our language, somewhere between complete silence and this rather rapid speech. I have taken great pleasure in our meeting. [*He bows and clicks his heels.*]

GENEVIEVE

[*Under her breath.*] Jacques!

EVA

[*Who appears at the door.*] Siegfried!

SIEGFRIED

[*Indicating* EVA *with his eyes.*] Forgive me. I am being called.

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

SCENE: SIEGFRIED'S *Study. Heavy furniture in the very latest artistic style of German "Secession." At the rise of the curtain, a general in black and white uniform is standing at the back of the stage. He salutes* EVA, *who motions him to retire into the passage.* GENEVIEVE *and* ROBINEAU *then enter.*

ROBINEAU

It is for the lesson, Fraülein.

EVA

I will tell the Herr Councillor.

[EVA *goes out. There is a silence. With a gesture* GENEVIEVE *draws* ROBINEAU'S *attention to the furniture of the room.*]

GENEVIEVE

I confess that I had not conceived the temple of lost memory to be quite like this.

ROBINEAU

Forestier's room was better?

GENEVIEVE

Precisely the opposite.

ROBINEAU

What do you mean by the opposite? Did not Forestier have an armchair and a writing table?

GENEVIEVE

The opposite. The armchairs were just the opposite of these armchairs. The table was the opposite of this table. The lighting was the opposite of this lighting.

ROBINEAU

All this furniture, my child, is designed by Kohlenschwanzbader.

GENEVIEVE

I could have sworn it was.

ROBINEAU

These busts are by Weselgrosschmidvater.

GENEVIEVE

I am not in the least surprised. And the electric light, who is that by?

ROBINEAU

What is it that surprises you then?

GENEVIEVE

Until I came into this room a minute ago, I could not make myself believe that Forestier was alive. I came with the feeling that I was going to be taken down into some dark and secret place, into the half light, into a study, which would be something between what Forestier had in Paris and what he will have in hell. I came to arouse

a mummy. I was going to go down into some royal vault—and this is what I find.

ROBINEAU

What you find is comfort.

GENEVIEVE

The idea of comfort was not present to my mind when I thought of the shade of Forestier. I can see now that I have been making the mistake ever since yesterday of still believing that he lived without chairs, without a clock, without an inkstand. [*She suddenly sees the inkstand on the table.*] Good heavens! They have been making him write with red ink! And cigars: he smokes cigars now. He detests cigars. I feel certain they have also made him do the two things that he abominates most—walking in the street without a hat and wearing braces. We shall need courage, Robineau. We shall have to disturb the habits of this tomb. First of all, take away this awful smoker's compendium. Put it wherever you like.

ROBINEAU

You are not reasonable. The thing is charming.

GENEVIEVE

And practical.

ROBINEAU

Of course, practical. Look. You take the match from the inside of the squirrel. You rub it on the back of Wotan, and you light the cigarette, which you have found in the belly of the swan. As for the ashes, you

throw them into the Walkyrie and the cigarette end into the bear. This series of legendary animals and heroes which the Germans like to call into requisition for all their most ordinary daily needs is very full of life. It is like that frieze of centauresses, made of brass and pursued by gnomes. They are alive.

GENEVIEVE

Yes, we shall have to kill them.

ROBINEAU

Sit down, anyhow.

GENEVIEVE

No part of me can make friends with this furniture. No, I shall not sit. Besides, the place is reserved. There are words on the cushion.

ROBINEAU

It is the fashion in Germany to embroider proverbs. The cushion says: "A dream by night. A cushion by day."

GENEVIEVE

Nobody asked it to say anything. And the embroidery on this little tablecloth. Is that another proverb?

ROBINEAU

[*Reading.*] "Untruth is the Jockey of Misfortune."

GENEVIEVE

Would an honest sideboard or honest tablecloth dare to come fresh from the factory, and spontaneously utter

these old leavings of human routine? This chattering of stools and murmuring of what-nots is a hypocrisy. Or, if they are to talk, let them really talk, as the furniture talks in Hoffmann. Let the sideboard sing Tyrolese yodels, and let the cushion give its own point of view of the people who have sat upon it.

ROBINEAU

Do sit down, first, Genevieve.

GENEVIEVE

It is just when your Germany does not speak that I begin to understand her. When I saw this town of church towers and gables as you showed it to me last night, on which the only thing written was the shadows cast by the moon, when I saw this frozen torrent forced into stillness, then I understood the age, the force, the language of it all. What are you doing, Robineau?

[ROBINEAU *is placing certain books in the shelf.*]

ROBINEAU

Time fuses. Two French volumes that I found at a bookseller's. There was not much choice. There I insert a little treatise on the selection of the spawn of trout. Here I put the "*Noble Qualities of Women*" by Legouvé. I do not say that they will immediately modify Siegfried's way of life, but he will see them and he will read them. And what are you thinking of doing?

GENEVIEVE

I really don't know. I wanted to ask your advice. It is very difficult.

ROBINEAU

Yes, it is very difficult. You might begin by the imperfect subjunctive.

GENEVIEVE

I am not speaking of the French lesson. I mean the revelation that I have to make to him.

ROBINEAU

That is precisely what I understood. Believe me, Genevieve, for ten years I have been giving lessons to the most different kinds of foreigners. Now, whatever they were, whether they were Scandinavians or Brazilians, and even if our relations had been until that moment only those of master and pupil, my explaining the subtleties of the imperfect subjunctive was enough to create between us an atmosphere of a sort of sympathy, a sort of tender gaiety. I can assure you, Genevieve, that some of the most delightful sentimental recollections of my life began with the imperfect subjunctive.

GENEVIEVE

Try and be serious. Robineau. Encourage me. Give me reasonable advice. Try and realise the part that I have to play. I am carrying a dagger in the folds of my dress; for what have I come to do here? I have come to kill Siegfried. I have come to stab the enemy king in his tent, and therefore I have a right to have by my side the confidant, whom the dramatists supply to Judith and to Charlotte Corday. I need a friend who shall say to me what the confidants say to them—that duty is duty,

that life is short. In fact all the truths which in this country would have been embroidered upon the cushion of Socrates or of Danton. Say them to me.

ROBINEAU

It will be a murder without wounds and without a corpse.

GENEVIEVE

That is just it. I shall be making invisible wounds and spreading colourless blood. I am afraid.

ROBINEAU

Don't hurry the business. You can take twenty lessons to teach French.

GENEVIEVE

That is still more terrible. Instead of assassinating Siegfried, you are advising me to poison the defenceless creature— What are you doing now?

ROBINEAU

I am taking away these cigarettes and putting Caporal instead.

GENEVIEVE

Oh, yes, you have explained your system, Robineau. Change Siegfried's comb for a comb from Paris. Replace every piece of furniture in this room, one by one, by his own pieces of furniture. Give him French dishes instead of the cooking that he gets, vineyards instead of hopgardens, a Frenchman instead of each German, and at last Forestier instead of Siegfried.

ROBINEAU

That is my method.

GENEVIEVE

I feel that I am quite incapable of following it. My instinct is just the opposite. Today I have not had the courage to put on the trinkets which he knew or which he had chosen. I have not taken the scent that he liked. Happily the fashion of the moment gives us dresses which do not belong to any very definite period. Dressmakers have never prepared us for eternity as they have this winter. My hair has been cut since he saw me. In fact I have never been reduced as I am today to so little individual an outward appearance, and to so diffuse a soul. I know only too well that my one chance of touching Forestier is to bring to the front all that is least individual and most racially instinctive in me. I shall air all the abstract views that I possess, all the dateless opinions that I have. I fear, my dear Robineau, that we shall speak much less of subjunctives than of life and death.

ROBINEAU

But will you tell me who he is?

GENEVIEVE

Who he is now? That is what I must find out. [*She points suddenly to a framed picture.*] Oh, Robineau, look.

ROBINEAU

That portrait?

GENEVIEVE

That woman's portrait.

ROBINEAU

Be calm. It is a picture

GENEVIEVE

Dear portrait. It is the woman's portrait by Vermeer of Delft. Ah, Robineau, look at it, and give thanks to it. I take courage again at the sight of it.

ROBINEAU

It is like you.

GENEVIEVE

There was just such a photograph in his study in Paris. It is the only thing that I can find here which belonged to his former life, and is also in his life today. But at least there is that. All is not lost, Robineau, for this little Dutchwoman has found a way across all the blank and all the darkness to come to him again.

ROBINEAU

I shall leave you. You have your confidante now.

GENEVIEVE

To be sure, the frame is not the same. Forestier's was a plain black line. Siegfried's seems to be made of horn, ivory and aluminum with pinchbeck gold corners. What is the kind of high-class frame with which I must surround myself if I am to succeed in getting as far as his retina? Are you going? Wait a moment. There is

still work for you to do. Take this cushion, in order that not a single piece of furniture, even the sideboard, may be able to speak during my lesson. Remove those flowers. Today shall be the harvest, when all the artificial flowers shall be taken in. Let the dwarfs catch the centauresses in a drawer. Where Frenchmen and women are present, the love affairs of gnomes and gods are forbidden. [*She turns out a chandelier.*]

ROBINEAU

Why all this darkness? It is too dark to see one another.

GENEVIEVE

Ah. We should see one another quick enough, if it were only blindness that prevented us. [*She pushes* ROBINEAU *out of the door. Left alone, she lights a little lamp, near the Vermeer picture, and before the picture she puts flowers from her dress.*] And now, shade of Forestier, return!

[SIEGFRIED *comes in slowly.*]

SIEGFRIED

Good evening, Madame.

GENEVIEVE

Not Madame, Mademoiselle.

SIEGFRIED

May I ask your name?

GENEVIEVE

Prat. My family name is Prat.

SIEGFRIED

And your Christian name?

GENEVIEVE

Genevieve.

SIEGFRIED

Genevieve. Do I pronounce it right?

GENEVIEVE

A little slowly. But as it is the first time—

SIEGFRIED

To sum up—you will allow me to sum up our conversation from time to time—this time it is easy. It has been a model dialogue. Thus, I sum up in the fewest possible words: I have before me Mademoiselle Genevieve Prat.

GENEVIEVE

The same. [*She sits. He sits on a corner of his armchair.*]

SIEGFRIED

What did you do in Canada?

GENEVIEVE

In Canada? Well, we had— You know what one has over there—we had a farm.

SIEGFRIED

Where was it?

GENEVIEVE

In the country. [*He laughs.*] Near a town.

SIEGFRIED

What town?

GENEVIEVE

What town? You know we don't trouble much about proper names in Canada. The country is big, but we are all neighbours. We used to call our lake, the lake, the town simply the town. As for the river—for no doubt, you are going to ask me questions about the immense river which runs through Canada— Nobody over there even remembers its name. It is simply the river.

SIEGFRIED

The post office must have a difficult task.

GENEVIEVE

Oh! We don't write much. When we do write to each other, we carry our letters ourselves, in sledges.

SIEGFRIED

What did you do at the farm?

GENEVIEVE

Just what one always does in Canada. In our house, we were chiefly kept busy with the snow.

SIEGFRIED

[*Laughing.*] I think I understand. It was a snow-farm. And those are your farm-clothes?

GENEVIEVE

We are rich. Sometimes we have had very good years, when the cold is great.

SIEGFRIED

Why are you making fun of me like this?

GENEVIEVE

[*Laughing.*] It is no use pretending. Why do you oblige me to plunge into an element which is not my own? No. I am not a Canadian. What difference does that make for our lessons? Let us just replace the positive by the negative. I am not a Canadian. I have not killed a grizzly bear, and so forth. The profit for my pupil will be just the same.

SIEGFRIED

Who are you?

GENEVIEVE

Let us make the exercise a little more difficult. Guess. I do not kill grizzly bears, but I adore cutting out my own dresses. I have never done any skiing, but my cooking is perfect.

SIEGFRIED

You are French? Why do you hide it?

GENEVIEVE

You are asking a lot of questions.

SIEGFRIED

You are right. The truth is that I am very little else than a questioning machine. Whenever I meet anything

with which I am unfamiliar, I fasten on to it at once. The whole of me, body and soul, is little more than the hand of a shipwrecked man. You have been told my story.

GENEVIEVE

What story?

SIEGFRIED

There are very few subjects on which I can speak without asking questions. One or two. German direct taxation since eighteen forty-eight; the legal position of the individual in the German Empire from the year one thousand to our own time—those are about the only two subjects, on which I can answer questions instead of asking them, and I fancy they are not subjects which it is worth while to invite you to discuss.

GENEVIEVE

We will see. We will keep them for some rainy Sunday. Go on asking me questions, then.

SIEGFRIED

I ought not to have asked you who you are. For in asking that I asked you everything. To me it seems that a Christian name followed by its surname is the answer to everything. If ever I find my family, I will never give any other answer to those who ask me questions. Yes, I am Mr. So and So, So and So. Yes, it is winter, but I am Mr. So and So, So and So. How beautiful it must be to be able to say, it is snowing, but I am Genevieve Prat.

GENEVIEVE

It would be cruel to contradict you. But I am very far from being of the same opinion. As I see them, human beings are condemned to a terrible anonymity. Their names, Christian names and nicknames as well as their positions and titles, are all such arbitrary, such temporary labels, which say so little about them, even to themselves. It may be a sad confession to make, but the pang which one feels before the unknown soldier, I feel it even more strongly before every human being, whoever he may be.

SIEGFRIED

Then perhaps I am the only man who seems to you to have a name, in this world of tears.

GENEVIEVE

I will not go so far as that.

SIEGFRIED

Forgive me for complaining. At any other time, I should have tried to hide from you at least for a few days, the darkness in which I live. The greatest kindness that any man can have for me is to be ignorant of my story. I should have told you that I am really descended from Siegfried, that my godmother has just sprained her ankle, that the aunt of my aunt is on a visit to me. You might have believed it, and we should have obtained the calm atmosphere which is so necessary for the study of the irregular verbs.

GENEVIEVE

You are right. We are forgetting our lesson. Ask me questions, Herr State Councillor, since you like asking questions. Ask me the kind of questions which one asks of teachers, whom one knows very well, and of strangers whom one does not know at all: "What is art?" or "What is death?" They are excellent exercises in practical vocabulary.

SIEGFRIED

And life? What is life?

GENEVIEVE

That is the question for Russian princesses; but I can answer it all the same— A doubtful adventure for the living, quite pleasant for the dead.

SIEGFRIED

And for those who are both living and dead?

GENEVIEVE

I must refuse to turn my lesson into a manual of desolation. Come, let us open the book instead at the chapter about the hairdresser, or about the cries of animals. Would not you like to know what the cry of the owl is in French?

SIEGFRIED

I am quite ready to learn it, if it would particularly amuse you to tell it to me. Although you are all smiles and gentleness and even gaiety, I cannot help feeling that deep down, below the mournful exercises to which I ap-

pear to be inviting you, you have yourself politely stretched a net of sadness. I am merely allowing myself to rebound by falling upon it.

GENEVIEVE

My fiancé was killed during the war. My life stopped at the point where yours began.

SIEGFRIED

I am sorry for you—but I would change places with you all the same.

GENEVIEVE

Let us change them.

SIEGFRIED

Do not talk like that. I wish you could know what a joy it is to feel that there is floating above you, in deep but clear layers, all the cloud of years of childhood, of girlhood, of youth, which you have brought to me when you came into this house. This basket full of words which you learnt from your mother, this pretty bunch made up of your first symphonies, your first operas, your first meetings with the moon, with the flowers, with the ocean, with the forests. You would make a great mistake to change all this, with which I see you crowned, for something which is merely what the future is preparing for you, and to be obliged to think, as I am obliged to think, when I see the night and the stars, "Night, stars, I have never seen you for the first time."—[*With a smile.*] Besides, no doubt you call them by their pet names.

GENEVIEVE

But this sense that your life is a blank page on which nothing has yet been written—do you not have it for the feelings as well, for ambition, for power, for love?

SIEGFRIED

No, I cannot help feeling that my heart is full of secret and guarded places. I do not despise myself enough to believe that I could have reached my age without having lived through desires, admirations, affections. I have not yet dared to open those secret places. I am waiting.

GENEVIEVE

You will not have to wait much longer.

SIEGFRIED

I sometimes tell myself the same thing. Destiny seems to be even more determined to solve human puzzles than are human beings themselves. She arranges for famous lost diamonds to be found in the middle of apples, for the wrecked ships, to whose complete loss the world had become resigned, to make their appearance again. If God allows errors to creep into his book of accounts, it is only by an occasional inadvertence. He is terribly careful. He will make a tremendous row when he finds out that there are two accounts for the same Siegfried. Yes, I can still rely upon the irrepressible gossip of the elements. . . . You are silent, but then you are merely human.

GENEVIEVE

I am preparing a sentence.

SIEGFRIED

Ah, you are right. Let us come back to our lesson. Let us come back to ourselves. [*He approaches her and looks at her.*]

GENEVIEVE

You have come back from far away. But perhaps from not so far as you think.

SIEGFRIED

Forgive me if I draw near to you, you who are unknown to me, as I daily draw near to my own reflection in the mirror. How gentle it is to face a mystery which is so much more tender and more attractive than my own. What a rest it is to have to ask myself, who is this young woman, who has she loved, what is she like?

GENEVIEVE

Whom. Whom!—feminine gender of the relative.

SIEGFRIED

How quickly one feels that one has the power of a magician when it is a question of guessing about others. I can see you as a child, playing with your skipping rope. I can see you as a girl reading near your lamp. I can see you standing at the edge of a pool, with its calm reflection, and then again of a river, with its reflection broken. Dear Genevieve, everything has not been gay in your life. I can see you as a young woman praying on the tomb of your fiancé.

GENEVIEVE

No. He was missing.

SIEGFRIED

Oh. Forgive me. Was he an officer?

GENEVIEVE

He became one during the war. It was as an officer that he disappeared, clothed in that sky-blue uniform whose colour the enemy was supposed not to see, but which made him invisible to us as well. He was a writer. He was one of those who foretold the war, who would have liked to prepare France for it.

SIEGFRIED

Did he hate Germany?

GENEVIEVE

He would have loved a peaceful Germany: but he was certain of her defeat; after which he was ready for the day when he should give her back his esteem for her.

SIEGFRIED

What did he say of Germany? Do not be afraid. I did not know that Germany. I am a German child of six years old.

GENEVIEVE

I do not pretend to understand politics.

SIEGFRIED

Are you not deliberately pretending to be innocent?

GENEVIEVE

He used to say, as far as I can remember, that Germany is a great and industrious country—full of enthusiasm,

with a great note of poetry, where a singer who sings out of tune can sometimes touch the heart more than one who sings true in another climate; but he said she was a brutal country, bloodthirsty, pitiless to the weak.

SIEGFRIED

Did he tell you of the youth of this ancient Empire, this Empire two thousand years old? Did he tell you of the vigour of this over-polished art, of the conscientious life of this great mass of people who are always called hypocrites, of the brilliant visions in the region of the soul and in the region of art, which have been seen by this people who are always supposed to have no taste?

GENEVIEVE

He used to say—oh, much that was good, for he adored the three notes of the song of the Rhine maidens, and he loved your love of Germany—he used to say that what Germany lacked in this century, which had favoured her more than any other people, was merely to be simple, to conceive life simply. He used to say that instead of following the instincts and the inspiration of her soil and of her past, she had yielded to the influence of a pedantic science and of over-ambitious princes, and had made for herself and out of herself a gigantic and superhuman model, and instead of giving a new form to human dignity, as she had done in the past again and again, she had done no more this time than to give a new form to pride and misfortune. That is what Jacques

said. And he also accused Germany of accusing everyone else.

SIEGFRIED

Did he tell you that we Germans ourselves accuse Germany of many other things besides, and that it is nearly always from Germany that has come the truth about Germany? As for this awful war, did he tell you the true causes of it? Did he explain it to you, as it should be explained in its fateful and inevitable aspect, as an explosion in a passionate and overheated heart? Did he tell you of what may be called this lover's madness—this marriage of Germany with the world? This almost physical love of the universe, which makes Germans admire all the manifestations of nature more than any other people? To have the finest menageries, the most daring explorers, the biggest telescopes? To love her even to the point of loving her minerals and her essential oils? Did he tell you of this force, which scattered Germans over every continent and spread everywhere the smell of her roast goose, but also the voice of her symphonies? Did he sufficiently explain this force as a migration of bees or of ants, as being as it were a nuptial exodus? Did he tell you all that, your friend Jacques?

GENEVIEVE

Jacques. Jacques. You know his name?

SIEGFRIED

You said it just now. Speak to me of Jacques. I should like to know his whole name. I have as yet made

so few friends abroad. Let me take one from the past, from the time that was once mine. What was his surname?

GENEVIEVE

Forestier.

SIEGFRIED

Fo or Fa?

GENEVIEVE

Fo, like the forests.

SIEGFRIED

What was he like?

GENEVIEVE

[*Smiling.*] Tall, with auburn hair, and a smiling face. Those three vague words present so exact a portrait of him, that you would recognise him among a thousand.

SIEGFRIED

Have you his picture?

GENEVIEVE

[*After a hesitation.*] Yes, I have it.

SIEGFRIED

In your hotel?

GENEVIEVE

No. Here.

[*A bell is heard.* EVA *quickly opens the door.*]

EVA

The Marshal is asking for you, Siegfried, it is urgent.

[SIEGFRIED *makes his excuses with a smile and a bow*

and goes out with EVA. FONTGELOY *enters from a door concealed in the bookcases and comes up to her.*]

FONTGELOY

And do you recognise me, Genevieve Prat? [GENEVIEVE *looks at him in silence.*] Don't I look like a relation? [GENEVIEVE *still looks at him.*] Tall, dark, speaking French without an accent. [*He seizes her hand rather roughly.*] Well, then, who am I?

GENEVIEVE

A Prussian drill-sergeant.

FONTGELOY

Wrong! You're wrong! A descendant of an old French house. [GENEVIEVE *still looks at him.*] I am another Forestier or another Siegfried, whichever way you like to put it. But I am a Siegfried who has been able to keep his name and his memory. And it is a long and sure memory. It goes back unbroken for two centuries and a half. [*He clicks his heels together.*] Jacques de Fontgeloy, whose ancestor was the first Protestant driven from France by Louis XIV, General of the Brigade of the Death's Head Hussars.

GENEVIEVE

The Death's Head Hussars? Do they still exist?

FONTGELOY

You see before you their general; and he from whom they take their title is never far off.

GENEVIEVE

I am impressed as little by the one as by the other.

FONTGELOY

Believe me, Mademoiselle, you have nothing to fear from the one or the other. I have come only to ask you to go away without waiting for Siegfried's return. Do not try argument. You have come too late to take him from Germany. You might as well try to tear away the Fontgeloys.

GENEVIEVE

France is flattered to see such determination shown in fighting for the possession of what has dropped out of her hands.

FONTGELOY

Dropped? The Fontgeloys did not drop. They were driven out, dismissed from their service as Frenchmen. My ancestor received an order one morning that within eight days he was to leave his property, his honours and his family. He did not wait for this lackey's respite. He left on the spot. But once he had crossed the frontier—that very evening—he attacked a French marauding detachment and killed two of the King's Guards who had that morning been his fellow-subjects.

GENEVIEVE

So it is not a loss of memory which has kept his descendants in Germany.

FONTGELOY

You have hit it. It is memory itself. It is the memory of the despotism, of the inquisition of your slavish bureaucracy, and an ever-living disgust for the tyrants, the list of whose names you still humbly recite.

GENEVIEVE

Oh. Yes, I know them, Loubet, Fallières.

FONTGELOY

In short, my ancestor settled himself near the frontier, received every French exile and sent him according to his special talents to whatever Prussian town wanted a notary, a burgomaster or a surveyor. Thus he strengthened Prussia just where she was weak. There remained yesterday a single place which was empty. The man for it has been found. He must not go back again, and I am directed by the Committee of my association to tell you so. He stays or he dies.

GENEVIEVE

What, all over again?

FONTGELOY

One man killed more or less has not counted for much between Germany and France, now or at any time in the last ten years. And now, Mademoiselle, you will follow me if you wish to prevent a misfortune happening to Siegfried. I have orders to expel you from the country, as well as your friend the philologist, whom my men already have under guard, and who is trying to soften

their hearts by complaining to them in high Saxon of the thirteenth century.

GENEVIEVE

Tell me. Are they many of you in Germany?

FONTGELOY

Germans like statistics. On the first of August nineteen fourteen, those of us in the Prussian Army alone, who were descendants of French exiles or émigrés, numbered fourteen generals, thirty-two colonels, and three hundred officers. These figures refer solely to gentlemen. There are also in the supply services a certain number who bear the name of Dupont.

GENEVIEVE

I had never suspected that whenever France has fought Germany, she has also fought what may be called a series of civil wars.

FONTGELOY

Civil wars! Ever since Louis XIV we have never gone back to France except to invade it. We shall go back again; and I do not lose hope of being one day billeted in the manor house of Fontgeloy, which still exists somewhere in the neighbourhood of Tours.

GENEVIEVE

Yes. It still exists—on the road to Chenonceaux.

FONTGELOY

Spare me the description of it, please.

GENEVIEVE

It is covered with roses, aristolochias, and jasmines. You are the only thing missing.

FONTGELOY

Aristolochias. What does that word mean?

GENEVIEVE

It is a secret word by which the French of the twentieth century recognise one another.

FONTGELOY

Why are you looking at me like that?

GENEVIEVE

I am stripping you.

FONTGELOY

What French effrontery.

GENEVIEVE

Pray don't misunderstand me. Let us forget your stories of exiles and émigrés for a moment. They no longer interest anyone but you. I am a sculptor, Monsieur de Fontgeloy. The human body is my model and my Bible. And under your helmet I can recognise the body which we sculptors give to Racine and to Marivaux. The race to which I belong, a race of good manners, has been hewn out of a dummy of hatred, of boldness and, if you will allow me to speak brutally for the first time in my life, of brutality. Your forehead, your wolf's teeth are thoroughly French, even your roughness is

thoroughly French. We French must not persist in believing that our country has always been gentleness and velvet. But as for me, I have all the more love and gratitude for the two centuries which you and yours have never known. They have clothed the naked body of France.

[*The telephone bell rings, a cannon shot is heard.*]

FONTGELOY

[*Thinking aloud.*] We will take the cannon first. [*He goes to the window and sees something. He then goes to the telephone.*] Censorship? What Censorship? Promotion by merit? What promotion by merit? War? What war?

[*Another cannon shot is heard.* GENERAL VON WALDORF *of the Infantry and* GENERAL LEDINGER *of the Artillery come in. Both are wearing long cloaks.*]

WALDORF

It is not war, it is Revolution, Fontgeloy.

FONTGELOY

The Communists?

WALDORF

No, Zelten.

FONTGELOY

You are laughing.

WALDORF

Zelten has just taken the Residency by assault, and is in power.

LEDINGER

In power? In a manner of speaking, I ask myself what may be said to be in power just now in our country.

WALDORF

Pray spare your wit, Ledinger. In any case, he has the power to put us in prison, and we are on the list. I have a fast car below. As soon as Siegfried has telephoned to Berlin, we will be off to Coburg, where my Brigade is stationed, and we will attack this very night.

FONTGELOY

But what troops can Zelten have?

LEDINGER

The troops which are always available in a so-called liberal Revolution—gendarmes, policemen, firemen—all those who are supposed to keep order—with this time a strong dose of drug maniacs and cubists.

WALDORF

I beg you, Ledinger. All of those who, like you, were brought up at a certain period of the General Staff, seem to have a tendency which is really insupportable to turn serious events into farce.

LEDINGER

Pray excuse me, Waldorf. But the General Staff is not now in question.

WALDORF

The General Staff is always in question.

LEDINGER

I must confess that I do not follow you.

WALDORF

That often happens to you, in the artillery, and not least when it is a question of the infantry as in my case. What I mean to say to you, Ledinger, is that we should not be in the position in which we are now, if, at the decisive moment, our army had possessed some other chief of its General Staff than the one who has left his witticisms as the only legacy.

LEDINGER

Do you mean to pretend that he was incapable?

WALDORF

He was bravery personified. I remember seeing him refuse to allow himself to be beaten by the Emperor himself at the manœuvres in Silesia.

LEDINGER

What fault had he then, which made him incur your displeasure?

WALDORF

His fault was that he had a wrong definition of war. War is not only a matter of strategy, of munitions and of daring. It is first of all a matter of definition. The essential thing is its chemical formula, which from the very beginning determines its success or its failure.

LEDINGER

That is entirely my opinion, Waldorf. And the definition given by my master has proved its worth. It

saved Frederick from the Russians and Louise from Napoleon. I stand to attention to give it to you: "War is the Nation." [*He salutes, and as he does so his cloak opens and shows his uniform.*]

WALDORF

That is the formula which lost the war. Besides, what do you mean by the nation? No doubt a mere hotch-potch of the grenadiers of Potsdam and the caricaturists of the socialist newspapers, the Death's Head Hussars and the cinema managers, our princes and our Jews.

LEDINGER

What I mean is all that part of the nation which thinks, works and feels.

WALDORF

Why do you not carry our formula to its logical extremes and say war is the League of Nations? That would hardly be more ridiculous. What is your definition? It means placing the General Staff on a level with the underlings of the country. What it amounts to is a democratic right to war. It is universal war suffrage for every German. Owing to this flattery you have succeeded in calling the whole nation to the direction of an enterprise which should have remained in our hands. And in making the whole nation part of it, you have made war into a limited liability company, with sixty millions of shares, but you have lost the control of it. That is the danger of shareholders' meetings. And yet what

a success was awaiting you if you had adopted the formula of my master and my school! It was a piece of practical advice, a lesson in zeal and application. You know it well, for you have read it as a motto in all our secret manuals. It is only necessary to repeat it, for any one of us, at any time, be he soldier or civilian, to feel its honour and its perpetual unity: "War is Peace." [*Similar salute to that of* LEDINGER.]

FONTGELOY

[*Breaking in furiously.*] You are mistaken, Waldorf. I do not fail to appreciate all the great things that your master did, although he thought right to allow supply units to wear Hussar trouser-straps. I also appreciate what there is in your definition that is sane and calm. It has never occurred for a moment to any General Staff to differentiate the State of Peace from the State of War. I beg you to believe that. But I know only a single word which is the equal of this word, and which can hold the scale against it in a definition—only a single word which is worthy and able to present this giant, to ensure his being everywhere known, to reveal his implacable virtues. And that is the word, Waldorf, which contains our definition, the formula which has never disappointed either our Grand Elector nor Bismarck, and which for the soldier is both a moral precept and a practical counsel in all times and in all circumstances: "War is War." [*He salutes in the same way as the others.*]

WALDORF

Wrong! You're wrong! That is merely a repetition. It is as if you were to say that General de Fontgeloy is General de Fontgeloy.

FONTGELOY

And in this definition which you are good enough to give of me there is no repetition. You know it yourself. For in your mouth it means: "This intelligent man—intelligent because he is a general—is a stupid man—stupid because he does not belong to the true General Staff." When I say "War is War," and when I say "My Mother is My Mother," I can assure you there is no repetition. And when I say "Siegfried is Siegfried," you cannot deny that the first term stands for a whole mass of suffering, doubts and disturbances, and the second, for an inexhaustible supply of glory.

SERVANT

[*Coming in at this moment.*] The Herr Councillor Siegfried awaits your Excellencies below, in the antechamber.

FONTGELOY

[*Aside to* GENEVIEVE *sternly.*] Silence is silence, Mademoiselle.

GENEVIEVE

And death is death, no doubt.

FONTGELOY

Exactly.

[*They all go out except* GENEVIEVE. SIEGFRIED *enters quickly. He is in a travelling suit.*]

GENEVIEVE

You have forgotten something?

SIEGFRIED

Have I not the look of someone who has forgotten something on purpose, like those who leave their umbrella behind in order to be able to come back?

GENEVIEVE

It is snowing. I know of nothing which is a real protection against snow.

SIEGFRIED

Your prediction has come true. The revolution has broken out. The lake of my future has broken through its dam at one stroke, and, for the first time, I am at last leaving a past behind me. Do not think hardly of me for also having purposely left behind here, in order to see you again, my courage, my confidence and my will power.

GENEVIEVE

That makes three umbrellas. You do not do things by halves.

SIEGFRIED

[*Who has taken his stand in front of her and is looking at her.*] At least I am seeing you again.

GENEVIEVE

Have I changed so much in the last quarter of an hour?

SIEGFRIED

I am seeing you again. Everything in you that I had not seen then, that I had never before seen in anyone, those sad lips, which, when they smile, show an even deeper sadness; that brow, leant forward a little, as if it was struggling against the light, as a bull struggles against another—I see it all, I see it all again. Speak to me.

[*Distant cannon is heard.*]

GENEVIEVE

Greater voices than mine are calling you.

SIEGFRIED

That does not sound to me like a call. A man who is under constant pressure finds the sound of the cannon so natural, so like the echo of his own heart. [*He looks at her.*] No. Never has sunlight found in this world an adversary which was so nearly his match—all the sunlight of the world is of just the same weight as you. You seem to me to be, the whole of you seems to be a lesson in divine balance. Speak. For your words are just the exact weight of silence. Speak.

GENEVIEVE

[*Slightly turning away towards the window and holding out her hand to him.*] It is snowing, go quickly.

SIEGFRIED

Soft hands. What is it that you touch to be so soft?

GENEVIEVE

Earth and mud. I am a sculptor.

SIEGFRIED

[*Going back to what* GENEVIEVE *had said before.*] It is snowing. In the last few years Fate seems to have been asking our pardon by wrapping all her resolutions in snow—Moscow, Buda-Pest, Munich. It has always been snow. It is now in snow that Pilate washes his hands. There is not a Saxon marching tonight, who does not move as silently as death. The fall must indeed be thick, for me not to hear, from where I stand, the spurs of my three generals.

[*A door opens softly behind* SIEGFRIED. FONTGELOY *shows himself to* GENEVIEVE *and then gently closes the door again.*]

GENEVIEVE

They are waiting for you. Good-bye.

SIEGFRIED

[*Coming nearer to her.*] How is it that I cannot answer you?

GENEVIEVE

Have I asked a question?

SIEGFRIED

Everything in you asks questions, except your mouth and your words. Among the timid and intangible notes

of punctuation which we poor mortals are between the incomprehensible phrases of destiny, Eva had already afforded me some delight. She is a note of exclamation; she gives a full-blooded and emphatic quality to the furniture or the landscape in which one looks at her. As for you, your calm and your simplicity are a question. I wish I could see you asleep. What a commanding question your sleep must be. It would only be possible to answer worthily to this pervading demand of your being by a confession, by a secret. And I have none.

GENEVIEVE

Good-bye.

SIEGFRIED

Stay. Perhaps I have one—surely the lightest secret that ever being in this world has held.

GENEVIEVE

Don't tell it to me.

SIEGFRIED

Even when you forbid me thus, you ask a question. Here, then, is my secret, since you demand it. It is nothing. But it is the only scrap of me, which my friends, and Eva, and the President of the Reich, and any one of the sixty millions of Germans do not already know. It is nothing. It is a word.

GENEVIEVE

Good-bye.

SIEGFRIED

Yes, I am staying. It is the only word among all those of the language which I speak today which seems to me to come from my past. You will see how insignificant and ridiculous it is, and yet when I hear it, although all other words, the most beautiful, the most moving, can only touch the brand-new being which I am today, that word goes so deep into me as to touch something unknown in my heart and my senses. It is my former heart, no doubt. A blind man who is brought face to face with the sun must feel something of this pang and this relief.

GENEVIEVE

Is it a proper name?

SIEGFRIED

It is not even a substantive. It is a poor little adjective. The spirit of my former life has only been able to send me just an adjective as far as my life of today. It is the most typically common-place, indeed, almost vulgar; but it is my family and my past. It is what remained in me that was insoluble. It is the word which will accompany me in death. It is my only baggage.

GENEVIEVE

Go. There is someone coming.

SIEGFRIED

People, just ordinary common people, sometimes say it to each other in the evening in the street without thinking. To me they seem to be playing with fire. Most

writers avoid it, but happily Goethe—you can see that he was the master of them all—uses it again and again. Critics indeed blame him for it, and regret these undistinguished lapses in his work. As for me, whenever this word comes again, I seem to see the flesh of Mignon through her rags, the flesh of Helen through her purple, the word is—O Heavens! what a commonplace word. It will make you laugh—the word is—it is rather a light word for me to use. The word is: "delicious." [*He half closes his eyes as he repeats it.*] "Delicious."

GENEVIEVE

I am laughing.

SIEGFRIED

Ah! How I should love to hear that word upon your lips, Genevieve.

GENEVIEVE

Go.

[FONTGELOY *appears again in the doorway.*]

SIEGFRIED

I beg you do not refuse me this kindness, this caress across the void. Say this word to me. You know that perhaps I am going to my death. I want to take all I can from this last hour.

GENEVIEVE

[*Who is almost collapsing as* FONTGELOY *looks at her.*] This delicious hour.

SIEGFRIED

To be sure. You can use it that way, too. [*He leans towards* GENEVIEVE *who keeps him away.*] Thank you. Good-bye.

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

SCENE: *The same as Act I. A* SCHUPO *is on guard before a closed door. A* SERGEANT *going on his rounds challenges him from a distance. Shouting the first part of the password.*

SERGEANT

Sieg!

SCHUPO

[*Coming to attention.*] Fried! [*The* SERGEANT *enters. The* SCHUPO *stands easy and points to the door.*] My prisoner is in there, Sergeant.

SERGEANT

Begin by repeating your orders.

SCHUPO

[*Coming to attention again.*] Ready, Sir.

SERGEANT

In case of fire!

SCHUPO

Number seven. I take the hatchet. I cut off the gas. I evacuate the women.

SERGEANT

Case of confinement!

SCHUPO

Number twenty-two. I unfix my bayonet and put down my rifle. I think of the grandeur of creation. I evacuate the men.

SERGEANT

Case of civil war!

SCHUPO

Number one. I take the grenades and the explosive bullets. I think of the grandeur of established authority. I clear the streets of all my citizens.

SERGEANT

Fellow-citizens.

SCHUPO

Fellow-citizens.

SERGEANT

Very good. Stand at ease. Stand easy. Well, will you soon be relieved?

SCHUPO

No, Sergeant, no relief, please. I have had the good luck to make a prisoner of the head of the Revolution. I mean to keep him until the end. There is a price on his head.

SERGEANT

You were only asked to produce his head. You will make yourself a nuisance by bringing in the rest of him. Where did you catch him?

SCHUPO

Why, where would you expect one to catch a King? In the Palace. In the servants' staircase.

SERGEANT

You ought to have taken him to Headquarters. Not to Siegfried's house.

SCHUPO

I have not been given any orders about how to arrest Kings. Besides this *is* Headquarters. All the orders have been sent from this house since yesterday, and then, Zelten himself asked to be brought to Siegfried's house. He said he had some revelations to make. I refused to give him anything to eat. [*Repeating as if by rote.*] Number twelve. Hungry men are more likely to talk.

SERGEANT

Has he not tried to bribe you?

SCHUPO

Yes. He wanted me to telephone to the Hotel Regina, to a Canadian governess to ask her to come at once.

SERGEANT

Did you telephone?

SCHUPO

No, here is the name and the address.

SERGEANT

You were wrong. She must certainly be an accomplice. Give it here. I will telephone to her at once. And we

will catch her in the trap. There must certainly be a reward for anyone who can determine what part Canada plays in German Revolutions.

SCHUPO

Look out. His Excellency is coming.

SERGEANT

Repeat your orders. Case of shooting a man who is condemned to death!

SCHUPO

Number two. I take my stand at a distance of eight paces. I think of the grandeur of military duty. I do not shut my eyes. I shoot, even if it is my fellow-brother.

SERGEANT

My brother.

SCHUPO

My brother.

SERGEANT

Stand at ease. Stand easy.

[*Enter* SIEGFRIED *and* EVA.]

SIEGFRIED

[*To the* SCHUPO.] You were told to stand easy, my friend. Do not go on standing at attention.

SCHUPO

It is impossible to do otherwise, before you, Excellency. It comes naturally.

SIEGFRIED

[*To the* SERGEANT.] Does it come naturally to you too?

SERGEANT

It is the only way authorised by regulations for cheering you, Excellency. We are cheering you.

[*There is a pause.*]

SIEGFRIED

There. I have heard you, my friends. Now leave us a moment. Is your prisoner well?

SCHUPO

Very well, Excellency. He is hungry.

SIEGFRIED

You will bring him here as soon as the generals have arrived.

SCHUPO

He has asked to see you alone, Excellency. It is for some revelations.

SIEGFRIED

I am waiting for the generals.

[*The* SERGEANT *and the* SCHUPO *go out.*]

EVA

Do not wait for the generals, Siegfried. Go upstairs and rest. You have not slept for twenty-four hours.

SIEGFRIED

Why be in such a hurry? This is the first day of my life when I have felt at peace, almost happy. In this

twilight, in this rush of feelings and actions, I am able to take the cloak of the future for the cloak of the past. Let me get what I can for a moment out of this mistake in my wardrobe. It happens so rarely that I prefer the language of this shadow of life to the nothingness of sleep.

EVA

You are dropping with fatigue. You are tired out.

SIEGFRIED

Heathily tired . . . tired as a man can be who has brought his working day to a satisfactory end; tired like a bricklayer or a farm-labourer, and not like a statesman, whose fatigue is generally that of a gambler who has played all night. I should even have liked to have had my evening school, like a bricklayer: to have taken my French lesson, and to have poured all my thoughts of this evening into another language to cool them, as one pours a burning liquid into another glass. But is Genevieve Prat still here? It must be for tomorrow.

EVA

Let us go upstairs, then. Your room is ready.

SIEGFRIED

You forget that I have to hear Zelten.

EVA

Why? His fate is decided.

SIEGFRIED

Decided?

EVA

Has there not been a Court Martial this afternoon? Have not the generals condemned him to death?

SIEGFRIED

The Senate has revised the sentence.

EVA

Yet he was judged according to the code. He was even given an official defender.

SIEGFRIED

What defender?

EVA

Fontgeloy.

SIEGFRIED

And they only condemned him to death? No. The Senate has decided to send him into exile. I am responsible for packing him off.

EVA

You are in charge of the State, and not of a railway station.

SIEGFRIED

[*Approaching.*] The idea of my seeing Zelten seems to make you anxious.

EVA

It irritates me. I have always considered these meetings between conquerer and conquered to be in the

worst of taste. Besides, it is paying too much honour to Zelten. He does not even represent what you have now conquered, that is to say, the spirit of anxiety and revolt in Germany. At the best he represents cubism and he certainly represents alcohol.

SIEGFRIED

He will talk all the better then. He wants to talk to me.

EVA

Do you expect to hear him say anything but insults and lies?

SIEGFRIED

You can rest assured that whatever his eloquence may be, he will not be able to convert me to his own opinion of me.

EVA

And what about his opinion of me?

SIEGFRIED

Of you?

EVA

Yes, of me. I know quite well that he wants to lower your opinion of me. He has always been jealous of our friendship and of our collaboration and he knows the whole of my life history.

SIEGFRIED

Have you any reason to be afraid of anything that he can say against you?

EVA

When one has lived for thirty years, there is always something that can be said against one.

SIEGFRIED

Twenty-eight years, Eva. [*He approaches, smiling almost in spite of himself.*] There must be some very strong motive to make a woman sacrifice not only her anxiety for her reputation but two years of her life. You are not telling the truth, my little Eva. I know as much about your past as you know little about mine. No, it is not about you that Zelten wants to speak to me. If it were you would be less anxious. Why are you not telling me the truth?

[*The* SCHUPO *comes in.*]

EVA

That only shows that I know how to lie.

SCHUPO

The generals, Excellency.

SIEGFRIED

Let them come upstairs at once.

[*Exit the* SCHUPO.]

EVA

For the first time between us two, Siegfried, it is my turn to ask instead of giving. I beg of you, do not see Zelten. Obey me without asking any questions as you did seven years ago, when I taught you to beware of thunderstorms which you had never seen before, and

not to take shelter under the tallest trees. I still possess this power of foretelling the storm. Let us avoid the one which is coming near us. We are only poor human beings. Let us try not to be lightning conductors. Do not attempt to stand up, lie down at full length. Sleep and trust in me.

[*The* SCHUPO *comes in again, and introduces* GENERALS WALDORF *and* LEDINGER.]

WALDORF

I understand that we are to try Zelten over again, Excellency. Is it to be Court Martial, or Drum-Head Court Martial? Orderly, if it is a Court Martial, we shall want a cloth on this table and three inkstands.

SIEGFRIED

It is not a Court Martial.

WALDORF

Then if it is a Drum-Head Court, bring an inkstand for the President, a blue pencil for the first Assessor, and a red pencil for the second.

SIEGFRIED

You are no longer judges in the matter, Waldorf. It is my duty to announce to Zelten the decision of the Senate, which is that he is to be sent into exile. I prefer to perform that duty in your presence. [*To the* ORDERLY.] Bring in your prisoner.

. . [*The* SCHUPO *brings in* ZELTEN. *He looks haggard. His clothes are crumpled. He speaks as he sees the generals.*]

ZELTEN

Ah! Ha! I am evidently not very dangerous. The last line of attack is composed of generals.

WALDORF

Silence.

ZELTEN

There has never been any way of stopping the conquered from talking, except massacre. If there had not been so many weak conquerers in the world, the bulk of ancient and modern literature would be reduced by two thirds.

SCHUPO

Silence. His Excellency wishes to speak.

ZELTEN

I am listening.

SIEGFRIED

[*Rather solemnly.*] I shall be brief, Zelten. The Senate has thought well to consider you to have been irresponsible. I consequently proposed that you be kept for life in an asylum; but others feel that you deserve some gratitude for having spared us the necessity of useless killing by your courage this morning. You are exiled. You will start immediately under escort—for Paris, if you like.

ZELTEN

Thank you on behalf of Paris for the choice—but may I ask what is your title to be entrusted with this mission? I have always been rather a stickler for form.

SIEGFRIED

The simplest possible title, that of a German.

ZELTEN

That is not such a simple title. It is a considerable title. It is not held by anyone who likes it; is it, Eva?

SIEGFRIED

Fräulein Eva has nothing to do with this matter.

ZELTEN

That is where you are mistaken. She has very much to do with it.

SIEGFRIED

I forbid you to say a word against her.

ZELTEN

Against her? I have nothing to say against her. On the contrary I admire her for having sacrificed her youth and her conscience to what she believes to be Germany.

SIEGFRIED

That will do. You can go.

ZELTEN

Oh! Not at all! I mean to make a finer exit than that. This is my day of abdication. It is a ceremony which has always seemed to me in history to be infinitely more moving than that of the crowning. I mean to go through all the possibilities of humiliation and of grandeur that there can be in an abdication.

SIEGFRIED

You can keep those rhetorical effects for the taverns of Paris, where you learnt that lamentable and comic idea of our country.

ZELTEN

I think you will agree with me in a moment that I was worthy of a more important exit after all. Yes, Siegfried. In an hour I shall have left Gotha; but you would be wrong to think that it is you, who are driving me out, or that it is Germany. I still think that the true Germans go on loving little kingdoms and great passions. I had prepared some fine proclamations on this matter with which I was hoping to cover your notices about additional fractions of taxation, and about the setting up of prefectures, but the last of my forces deserted—I mean paste. What is driving me out of my country, what inspires the resistance of the Empire in general and the help which it has given you, is not your power of decision, not your orders, full of genius though they may be. It is two telegrams sent to Berlin and intercepted by my postal services. Be so good as to read the first one, Waldorf.

WALDORF

[*After a look of interrogation towards* SIEGFRIED.] Morgan Rockefeller to President Reich. "If Zelten remains in power Gotha, shall cancel contract artificial phosphate."

ZELTEN

Here is the second. It comes from London.

WALDORF

For Herr Stinnes. "If Zelten holds out shall force rise of mark."

ZELTEN

And that is all. There are the two threats which correspond to the excommunications of the middle ages, and are hurled against me by the Centre and the Catholics. Artificial phosphate is our Canossa of today. I have intercepted no such wireless messages as the following: "If Zelten is President German musicians annul symphonies Beethoven," "If Zelten is Regent, German philosophers henceforth incapable defining categoric imperative," "If Zelten is King German school girls refuse to pick wortleberries to song of blackbirds"—but I can do no more. I have made the last effort to prevent Germany from becoming a limited liability company, and I have failed; so let our Rhine which was thus disturbed for a moment, be permanently calmed by mineral oil. And now, Siegfried, the rest concerns us two alone. Send these generals away.

SIEGFRIED

No, they are my witnesses.

ZELTEN

To be sure. Then let them be my witnesses too. Witnesses to my love of Germany. Yes, Siegfried, I have loved her. I can still smell the scent of her. That scent of dust, of roses and of blood which she exhales as soon as the smallest of her thrones is touched. I have had all

that she can give to her lovers—Drama and the power over souls, though it has only lasted a day. You will never get anything more than the cheers of friendly societies and speeches at agriculture dinners. You will get, in fact, what she gives her servants. Now send these soldiers away. I must speak to you alone.

SIEGFRIED

I have neither the desire nor the right to have a confidential interview with you.

ZELTEN

Let them stay, then. So much the worse for you. Besides, it is in the tradition that whenever Fate is about to make an abscess upon the earth burst, she always begins by filling it with uniforms. It is no doubt her idea of congestion. When Oedipus, when Oedipus, I say, was about to learn that he had taken his mother to wife and had killed his father, he made a point of gathering around him all the senior officers that his capital contained.

WALDORF

We are general officers, Zelten.

LEDINGER

Shall I not bring this comedy to an end, your Excellency?

ZELTEN

If you will look at the face of Eva, Ledinger, you will see that comedy is not in question. When you see those pale lips, that tiny line across the forehead of the

heroine, those hands which are pressed against each other without friendship, as if they were strangers—in all this you will recognise tragedy. We are indeed at that very moment when the stage hands are silent, when the prompter prompts more softly, and when the spectators, who of course have guessed everything before Oedipus or before Othello, are trembling at the idea of being told what they have known through all eternity—I refer to non-military spectators, for you have guessed nothing, have you, Waldorf?

WALDORF

Call the guard, Ledinger.

SIEGFRIED

[*Stepping forwards.*] No, let him speak.

ZELTEN

[*Turning towards* SIEGFRIED.] Ah! He—he has guessed.

EVA

Do not listen to him, Siegfried, he is lying.

ZELTEN

He has guessed. He knows that it is all about himself. The two ravens that flew above the head of Siegfried, the real Siegfried, are now flying above the head of his namesake.

SIEGFRIED

[*Standing close to* ZELTEN *and speaking in a strained and rapid voice.*] Spare us the metaphors. Speak.

ZELTEN

To be sure. Forgive me. Germans love metaphors. So I will henceforth avoid them with you.

SIEGFRIED

Is it a question of me, Siegfried?

ZELTEN

Not of Siegfried, of you.

SIEGFRIED

Of my past?

ZELTEN

Of your past.

SIEGFRIED

What lie will your hatred make you tell?

ZELTEN

I do not hate you. We politicians do not waste our hatred on any but our fellow-countrymen.

SIEGFRIED

You have discovered the name of my family?

ZELTEN

Not your name, not your family. The hints which I have been throwing about for the last few minutes must have put you on the track. I have discovered what I have long suspected. I have discovered that the man who applies his brain to determine his judgment, who brings his wit to animate his talk, who calls his reason to establish his calculations—that man is not a German.

SIEGFRIED

I do not believe a word of what you are saying to me, Zelten.

ZELTEN

I am not surprised. I have no luck today. Even the Germans are showing some sense of criticism towards me today.

SIEGFRIED

Shall we have to force you to speak?

ZELTEN

To speak? But I have spoken, and moreover I will not say a word more. I want to cross the frontier a living man. Besides I have exhausted all my effects. It is now Eva's turn to continue this scene.

EVA

I despise you, Zelten.

ZELTEN

That is the first feeling that is always aroused by the truth, Eva; but you are stronger than I am, if you are not yourself despised in a few minutes.

EVA

I do not understand a word of what he is talking about, Siegfried.

ZELTEN

Eva knows everything, Siegfried—about your arrival in the hospital, about the peculiar accent in which you made your groans, about the identity disc of a foreign

army which you had around your arm—she can give you details about all this. As for me I never sell the truth except in bulk.

LEDINGER

[*To the* SCHUPO.] That is quite enough, take out this madman.

ZELTEN

[*Turning round as he gets to the door.*] Ah, Siegfried, it is a pity that you do not like metaphors or parables. I might have told you the one about the fox who slipped quietly into the assembly of the birds and who suddenly found himself both alone and revealed, when the birds flew up into the air. The wings are already beginning to open, Siegfried. The feathers are rising, the Goethe bird, the Wagner bird, the Bismarck bird are already stretching out their necks. At a movement from Eva they will be gone.

SCHUPO

March.

ZELTEN

Do you ever engage in athletic sports, Schupo?

SCHUPO

I engage in whatever contributes to the greatness of the police.

ZELTEN

Ah, then you go in for boxing. Well then, you have just had the rare privilege of seeing what is called in boxing the double knockout. [*He goes out.*]

SIEGFRIED

[*Without moving.*] Gentlemen, the farce is ended. Let each of us return to his post. I shall stay here. You will come to keep informed of what goes on, and consult me, as it may seem desirable.

LEDINGER

Certainly, your Excellency. What tune shall our regimental bands play as we march into the town?

SIEGFRIED

What a question? Why, our national anthem, the German national anthem.

[*The generals go out.* SIEGFRIED *and* EVA *are left alone.* SIEGFRIED *goes up to* EVA *and looks at her for a long time straight in the face. His expression is severe. During the whole of this scene troops are marching past the window outside, and bands are playing.*]

SIEGFRIED

Am I a German, Eva?

EVA

What do you mean? A German?

SIEGFRIED

Am I a German, Eva?

EVA

I can give you your answer from the bottom of my soul; yes, Siegfried, you are a great German.

SIEGFRIED

There are some words which will not admit of an epithet. You cannot tell the dead that they are great dead. Am I a German, Eva?

[*Shouts are heard without.*]

EVA

There is your answer.

SIEGFRIED

It is your turn to answer now. Was I a German when you watched over my wounded body and saved me?

EVA

You asked for water in German.

SIEGFRIED

Every soldier who went to the attack knew how to ask for water in all the languages of the enemy. Did I speak with an accent when I asked for this water? You have often told me that you could tell the country and even the district from which a wounded man came by his groans. I must have done more than merely ask you for water. I must have groaned.

EVA

You were courage itself. [SIEGFRIED *walks towards the door.*] What are you doing, Siegfried?

SIEGFRIED

I am going to address the crowd and tell them the truth about myself.

EVA

Siegfried!

SIEGFRIED

[*Coming back to her.*] This is the last time that I come in answer to that name.

EVA

When you were lying there, without money, unconscious, and without a past—yes, you are right, I can tell you today because the saving of you settled your Fate for ever—when you had no other language and no other gesture than those of a poor wounded animal, at that moment perhaps you were not a German.

SIEGFRIED

What was I?

EVA

Neither the medical officer nor I ever knew.

SIEGFRIED

You swear that?

EVA

I swear it.

[*The* SERGEANT *comes in.*]

SERGEANT

Mademoiselle Genevieve Prat.

SIEGFRIED

Go.

[EVA *goes out slowly.* GENEVIEVE *enters, and stands near the door.* SIEGFRIED *walks up and down in a*

feverish way at the beginning of the scene, and he answers the questions of GENEVIEVE *as he passes in front of her.*]

GENEVIEVE

Is that Zelten whom I have just met between those soldiers?

SIEGFRIED

Yes, it is Zelten.

GENEVIEVE

Is he being shot?

SIEGFRIED

Do not be afraid. He is being taken to the train, which will carry him to his true kingdom.

GENEVIEVE

His true kingdom?

SIEGFRIED

Yes. The point where the boulevard Montmartre meets the boulevard Montparnasse.

GENEVIEVE

That is impossible.

SIEGFRIED

It is true all the same.

GENEVIEVE

I mean the two boulevards. They are parallel, Herr Councillor. One is quite at the north and the other quite at the South, and it is quite improbable that there will ever be a point at which they will meet. [*She comes*

forward.] You must come to Paris one day and see which streets meet and which do not meet. Why have you sent for me? For your lesson?

SIEGFRIED

My lesson?

GENEVIEVE

You seem to be tired. Sit down. Let us both sit down on this seat, which is placed so as to look over Gotha as if it were a seat of the Touring Club. What a delightful town hall. It dates from fifteen seventy-four, does it not? How much older it looks than the clock tower, which was built in fifteen seventy-five.

SIEGFRIED

What a knowledge you have of the town.

GENEVIEVE

It is a very recent knowledge. It is only since yesterday, since I have known you, that I have wanted to know this country, its history and its life, and this town —I have been thinking of asking you in exchange for my lessons in French, to give me some lessons in German and in Germany. I mean to stay here, and study with one of your sculptors, to have a little German girl as a model, to see you often if you like my visits—and then in a few months, if I can, to speak to you in your own language. Can a foreigner learn German quickly?

SIEGFRIED

It took me six months.

[GENEVIEVE *looks at him with surprise. The band in the courtyard plays the German national anthem.*]

GENEVIEVE

What are they playing?

SIEGFRIED

The German national anthem.

GENEVIEVE

Don't you stand up?

SIEGFRIED

Yes, we stand up—unless we are exhausted and beaten to our knees by life, or unless we are foreigners.

[GENEVIEVE *rises.*]

SIEGFRIED

You are standing up? Have you beaten life to its knees then?

GENEVIEVE

I take on trust the national anthem of the land of music, and I stand up to do it honour; for you know I intend to study music here, too, and to become a musician, as you are all musicians. Can it be learnt?

SIEGFRIED

I must have had the whole thing by contract, for I only had six months for that too.

[*There is a pause.*]

GENEVIEVE

What a mysterious thing the French language becomes when it is spoken by a German. Why, what is the matter with you? A little while ago I saw you pass along between the cheering crowds. Everyone admired your health and your strength.

SIEGFRIED

The name of Siegfried evidently does not bring luck in this country, Genevieve. This body, full of health and strength, is the body of a German who is dying.

GENEVIEVE

[*Frightened.*] What do you mean?

SIEGFRIED

Eva has just confessed it. No national anthem is being played. Ah! to be sure, silence is my national anthem. [*There is a long pause.*] What an interminable national anthem!

GENEVIEVE

You are suffering.

SIEGFRIED

It is a kind of death which does not proceed without suffering. When a man has a family, a house, a past, perhaps it is possible to take away his country from him without too much of a wrench; but my family, my house and my past were all Germany. Behind me as a buffer against the void my doctors had only been able to slip Germany. But they had slipped it there all complete. Her history was all my youth. Her glory, her de-

feats and her heroes were all my memory. It gave me a glittering past with which I was able to believe that my childhood, that formless and opaque chrysalis, had perhaps been lit up. All that light is now dark.

GENEVIEVE

My dear friend.

SIEGFRIED

All that light is now dark. I am not afraid of the night; but I am afraid of this unseen and sombre creature which is rising in me; which is taking my shape. Which is spreading a shadow over every thought that tries to move my brain. I dare not even think.

GENEVIEVE

You must not stay like that. Look at me. Lift your head.

SIEGFRIED

I dare not even move. At my first movement, the whole of the edifice which I still carry within me will collapse into dust. Lift my head? Why it would only be to see on the walls all those heroes and all those landscapes suddenly become strangers to me, and even enemies. Think, Genevieve, of what must be the feelings of a child of seven when all the great men, the towns and the rivers of the little history that he knows suddenly turn their backs upon him. Look at them, they are denying me.

GENEVIEVE

It is not true.

SIEGFRIED

I am no longer a German. Oh, that is very simple, is not it? All I have to do is to reverse everything. My days of victory are no longer Sedan and Sadowa. My flag is no longer composed of horizontal lines, around me the East and the West will no doubt change places. What I thought to be the highest examples of loyalty and honour will no doubt now become treason and brutality.

GENEVIEVE

But half the human race can change both its name and its nation without suffering—at least half. All women for instance.

SIEGFRIED

This buzzing that I hear around me, this beating of wings—is being made by no less than sixty million beings, and their millions of ancestors and their millions of descendants, who are flying away from me, as Zelten said just now. I have only to think of one of these great men, whom I have so profoundly admired, for him in fact to take wing and leave me. Ah, Genevieve, I cannot bring myself to tell you the names of the two who have left me in this very second of thought.

GENEVIEVE

If they are really great men, you will still see them from your new country.

SIEGFRIED

My new country! Ah! Why did not Eva lean still closer over that wounded man, over that poor gasping fish upon the bank that I was? Why did she not make me repeat that word "water"? Why did she not force me to say it, to say it again and again, even if it had obliged me to suffer a still more cruel thirst, until she had known what accent coloured it, and whether when I spoke it I was thinking of a blue sea or of rushing rivers, of a lake or even of a marsh. By having been in such a hurry, Eva has condemned me to an eternal thirst, and I hate her.

GENEVIEVE

She acted for the best. You stood so high in her eyes that she gave you what she thought was the most splendid country. She had no choice.

SIEGFRIED

I have to choose now.

[*The* SERGEANT *enters.*]

SERGEANT

A signature, Excellency. [SIEGFRIED *signs without reading.*] Your Excellency does not read the paper? It is the death warrant of the foreigners.

SIEGFRIED

The foreigners?

SERGEANT

The non-German revolutionaries, who were caught carrying arms.

SIEGFRIED

Those men in chains before whom I passed an hour ago?

SERGEANT

Yes, in a line against the wall.

SIEGFRIED

Russians?

SERGEANT

There was one Russian; but every country in Europe was represented. It was really what we call in a police raid a packet of samples.

[*There is a pause.*]

SIEGFRIED

I have been taken unaware in giving my signature. Sergeant, you will state that I do not consider it as binding. An execution of this kind is a matter for the Council.

SERGEANT

Too late, Excellency. The signature was a matter of form. They have already been shot.

SIEGFRIED

All?

SERGEANT

I have been instructed to leave you a copy of the list, Excellency.

[*He goes out. There is a long pause.*]

SIEGFRIED

What do you say to that, Genevieve?

GENEVIEVE

To what?

SIEGFRIED

To this beginning of my third existence. I have no doubt given my signature to the death of one of my own people.

[GENEVIEVE *gently comes up to him.*]

GENEVIEVE

Show me the list?

SIEGFRIED

Here it is.

GENEVIEVE

I cannot read it. My eyes see nothing. I beg of you, read it yourself.

SIEGFRIED

[*Almost with a laugh.*] Schmidt, Lopez, Cerebrier, Hanley, Petersen.

GENEVIEVE

Is that all?

SIEGFRIED

That is all.

GENEVIEVE

[*Coming up to* SIEGFRIED.] Then, no, my friend.

SIEGFRIED

To whom and to what are you answering?

GENEVIEVE

No. I say no. You have not signed the death warrant of one of your own people.

SIEGFRIED

What do you mean?

GENEVIEVE

Ah! Fate is wrong to entrust her secret to a woman. I can hold my tongue no longer. Let the result be what it may. Ah, forgive me for being so little capable of holding back my effects.

Forgive me if I say to you at one rush the three sentences which my lips have been burning to say ever since I saw you, and which I have only held back because I was afraid they would kill you. It might perhaps be possible to put them into some order, into some gradation, which would make them sound natural and inoffensive. But what can that order or that gradation be? There they are. I must say them all at once. No, you have not killed one of your own people. You are my fiancé. You are Jacques Forestier; you are a Frenchman.

[EVA *has come in during the last words of* GENEVIEVE *and approaches* SIEGFRIED.]

EVA

Siegfried! [SIEGFRIED *turns his head towards her.*] It is I, Siegfried. [SIEGFRIED *gives a gesture of weariness.*] If it is a crime to have shared my country with you, then I ask your forgiveness, Siegfried. [SIEGFRIED *gives an indeterminate gesture.*] If it is a crime to have taken a lost child who was shivering at the door of Germany and to have clothed it with the gentleness of Germany, and fed it with her strength, then forgive me.

SIEGFRIED

Enough, enough. Leave me.

EVA

Every right had given you to us, Siegfried. Adoption, friendship, tenderness. For two weeks, I watched over you, night and day, before you recovered consciousness. You did not arrive from another country. You arrived from nothingness.

SIEGFRIED

No doubt that country has attractions too.

EVA

If I had known that Fate was to give you back a country, I should not have made you a present of mine. It was only yesterday that I learnt the truth. It was only today that I lied to you. I was wrong. I should myself have told you everything. For nothing can now be changed by this revelation.

SIEGFRIED

Enough, enough, Eva. Good-bye.

EVA

Why good-bye? Of course, you are staying with us.

SIEGFRIED

With you?

EVA

You are not going to leave us? You are not going to throw us over?

SIEGFRIED

Who, you?

EVA

All of us. Waldorf, Ledinger, the thousands of young men who marched with you here, an hour ago. All those who believe in you: Germany.

SIEGFRIED

Leave me, Eva.

EVA

It has never been my habit to leave you when you are wounded.

SIEGFRIED

What are you trying to do?

EVA

To touch your heart, your conscience. Listen to me. I have had a day's start over you in trying to find my way in this fog. You will see how everything in you will be clear tomorrow. Your duty lies here. For seven years, not a memory has reached you of your past. Not a sign has been made by it. There is not a fraction of your body which is not new. Not the smallest inclination has led you towards what you had left. All the old ties and duties were dead. What have you to say, Mademoiselle?

GENEVIEVE

I? I say nothing.

EVA

You do not give that impression. Your silence is louder than our voices.

GENEVIEVE

We must each use the language we have.

EVA

I beg of you, condescend at least to look at me. We are struggling, we two women. Stop staring in front of you as if you saw nothing.

GENEVIEVE

We must each use our own gestures.

EVA

Why this contempt for a woman who is fighting for her country, while you are only fighting for yourself? Why do you say nothing?

GENEVIEVE

Perhaps it is because the only arm that I could ever use against any of the adversaries whom I have had to fight in my life until now has been silence alone.

EVA

Perhaps it is because any word that you could speak at this moment would be nothing but littleness and egoism.

GENEVIEVE

I was thinking, too, that higher voices must be saying to our friend all that either of us could say. How-

ever, perhaps you are right after all. Perhaps the only comfort that we can bring him at this moment is to let him see this duel taking place outside of himself, not between two parts of his own being which it is tearing asunder, but between two women of different countries. I can even hold out my hand to you, so that he shall not think that he is being torn asunder by two terrible and irreconcilable spirits.

EVA

I cannot go so far as that. What right have you to be here? Who brought you to this country where you have no business?

GENEVIEVE

A German.

EVA

Zelten?

GENEVIEVE

Zelten.

EVA

Zelten is a traitor to Germany. You see, Siegfried. This plot was not directed towards repairing an error of the past, but towards taking you away from the country of which you are the chief hope, the country which has given you power and respect, two things which it does not always give even to its own kings.

SIEGFRIED

Two things which now I cannot give to myself—I beg of you, leave me, both of you.

EVA

No, Siegfried.

GENEVIEVE

Why, Jacques?

SIEGFRIED

Can you not both of you find some name to call me by, which shall be half way between Siegfried and Jacques?

EVA

There is no half way between duty and the ties of which this woman is the symbol.

GENEVIEVE

Symbol? A Frenchwoman is too much a follower of fashion ever to be a symbol, ever to be anything but a living suffering body clothed in the latest dress. Besides, you are making a mistake. If Jacques had had to choose between duty and love, he would have chosen long ago. It is so easy to take away the traces of love, which there are in the word duty, and the traces of duty, which are all over the word love, and to strike a decisive but false balance between the two as they do in tragedies; but the choice which he has to make is between a splendid life which is not his own and a void which is. Who would not hesitate?

EVA

The choice which he has to make is between a country of which he is the brain, a country whose flag stands for him, a country which he can save from fatal con-

fusion, and a land where his name is only remembered because it is cut into a stone, where he can be of no use, where his return can only benefit the morning papers, and that for no more than a single day, and where no one, from the peasants to the rulers, expects him. Is not that the truth?

GENEVIEVE

It is the truth.

EVA

He has no relations living. Has he?

GENEVIEVE

None.

EVA

He had no sons, no nephews?

GENEVIEVE

None.

EVA

He was poor? He had no house anywhere in the country; not an inch of French soil belonged to him?

GENEVIEVE

None.

EVA

On which side is your duty, Siegfried? Here sixty million men are waiting for you; there no one. Am I not right, no one?

GENEVIEVE

No one.

EVA

Come, Siegfried.

GENEVIEVE

Ah, yes. Someone is waiting for him all the same. Someone? Perhaps it is too much to say that; but a living thing is waiting for him—a very little consciousness, but still a consciousness. A very little mind, but still a mind.

EVA

Who?

GENEVIEVE

A dog.

EVA

A dog?

GENEVIEVE

His dog. Your dog is waiting for you, Jacques. Everyone else has given you up—your friends, your masters, your pupils. Even I had begun to think myself justified in giving you up, because I had given up my own life. The disappearance of a man in war is a sort of apotheosis, an ascension. It is a death without a body, and so it avoids buryings and mournings and even regrets. For the man who has disappeared seems to have made himself one with the earth and the air where he was born, more quickly than any skeleton could have done, for he has become part of them at once. Well, your dog has not given you up. He is waiting for you.

EVA

The thing is absurd.

GENEVIEVE

The thing is perhaps even more absurd than you imagine. The dog is a poodle. He is white, and, like all white dogs in France, he is called Black. The thing is absurd, but Black is waiting for you, Jacques. He has settled himself among your clothes, and such of your possessions as still retain a trace of the smell of you, and he is waiting for you. I take him out for a walk every day. He looks for you. Sometimes in the earth, I admit, by scratching for you; but, far more often, in the air, at the height at which are the faces of other men. He is not one of those who believe that you have gone back atom by atom to take your place in nature. He is waiting for you, yourself, the whole of you.

EVA

Stop this pleasantry.

GENEVIEVE

Oh, yes. I know. You would like me to talk of France. You think it degrading that the only bait that I should hold out, to attract Siegfried, should be a living poodle?

EVA

We are passing through a moment which is great, and you are making it small.

GENEVIEVE

How is it that a poor dog of no pedigree, hardly of any breed, can seem to me to be entitled to represent

France today? It is indeed a mystery. But I can think of nothing else to say to Jacques. The greatness of Germany and the greatness of France can certainly furnish a fine series of antitheses and contrasts. It is certainly a dramatic situation that the only two nations still left who are not merely enterprises either of commerce or of decoration, but who have each a quite different notion of good and evil, should decide, instead of making war upon each other, to carry on a tiny conflict, a figurative hand-to-hand fight, within the soul of a single man; but that dramatic situation belongs to tomorrow.

EVA

May one ask what is the situation of today?

GENEVIEVE

Today, Jacques, the drama is being played between the crowd, who are at this moment cheering you outside in the street, and this little dog. That dumb life which still refuses to give up hope. That dumb life is indeed more than that of the dog, and I was wrong to say that he alone was waiting for you. Your lamp is waiting for you. The initials on your writing paper are waiting for you. So are the trees on your boulevard and the drinks which you used to drink there and the old-fashioned clothes from which I have kept the moth, I hardly know why, but in which you will at last be able to feel comfortable. There is also that invisible coat which is woven around every man by a certain way of

eating, of walking, of greeting his fellows and all that harmony of tastes, of colours, and of scents, which is created for us by our earliest faculties of childhood. All that is your true country. All that is what you are searching to find. I have realised it ever since I arrived here. I quite understand your constant discomfort. Between the sparrows, the wasps and the flowers of this country and those of your own there is a difference, which is indeed imperceptible, but to which you cannot get accustomed. It is only when you shall find again your own animals, your own insects and your own plants, when you smell again those scents which are different in every country for the same flower—it is only then that you will be able to live happily, even though your memory be a blank, for it is all these things which are the unseen web of that memory. In short, everything is waiting for you in France, except Frenchmen. Here, except for Germans, there is nothing that knows you, nothing that guesses at what you are.

EVA

It would be all very well for you to put on your old-fashioned clothes, Siegfried. They would not enable you to shake off the seven circles which your seven German years have wrapped around you. Believe me, the man who has seven times been frozen by the old German winter, who has seven times been warmed up again by the youngest and softest and most throbbing spring-time of Europe, can never again be sensitive to the sea-

sons of more temperate countries. Your habits no longer belong to sitting in front of a café but are in tune with our enormous beaches and with our closely packed towns, with this fury of many landscapes which alone can truly satisfy the soul. I beg of you not to give up this great and far-seeing heart which you have acquired from us, in order to exchange it for that precise little machine, that alarm-clock, which wakes you with every emotion, the heart of a Frenchman. [*The music of a military band and the cheers of the crowd are heard outside.*] Choose, Siegfried. Do not yourself be blackmailed by this past of which you no longer know anything. Whatever may be the flatteries and the calumnies which may be used to attract you back towards it, it is not really a dog which this woman has placed in France as a bait for you, it is yourself. That part of yourself which you do not know, of which you are still ignorant and which you have lost for ever. Do not sacrifice yourself to your shadow!

GENEVIEVE

Choose, Jacques. You have seen that I should have preferred to go on keeping this from you. That I was ready to wait for an opportunity of breaking it to you less violently. To wait for months, to wait until the dog was dead, he is already very old, by the way. Fate has not wished it thus. Now, I await your decision.

[*Further cheers are heard. The light of illuminations is seen.*]

EVA

Take care, Siegfried. Our friends are awaiting my return. They will soon be here. They will try to force you. Yield to friendship instead. Look and listen. These illuminations are in your honour. It is you whom the crowds are cheering. Hear the voice of this people which is calling you. It is perhaps worth as much as the bark of a dog. Between this light and that darkness. Between Germany and Black: which is your choice?

SIEGFRIED

What can be the choice of a blind man?

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

ACT FOUR

SCENE: *The waiting-room of a frontier railway station which is divided in two parts by a luggage counter and a little gate. It is not yet morning. The* FRENCH CUSTOMS OFFICIAL *is sitting over a little stove and reading a paper.* GENEVIEVE *comes in from the entrance on the right of the stage and speaks across the counter.*

GENEVIEVE

Is there any news in France, Customs Officer?

PIETRI

Yes, there is today. The Stationmaster of Ajaccio has been promoted into the first class without changing his post.

GENEVIEVE

I am speaking of Paris.

PIETRI

No, no one has been appointed in Paris. He is only fifty-five. It will be a splendid example of a first-class pension.

GENEVIEVE

Will you tell me the name of this hero?

PIETRI

Pietri, the same as mine, and we are both Corsicans, but he has had more luck. He was only sixteen when he helped an old lady to cross over the line at Cannes station. It was the mother of Gambetta. Ever since then he has had special promotion. As for me, it was my fortune to find two rolls of lace in the travelling bag of the wife of a president of the Senate. [*He goes on reading.*]

GENEVIEVE

Customs Officer, won't you tell me why is it that the customs service at the French frontiers is entirely represented by Corsicans?

PIETRI

It takes a Corsican to understand that France is an Island.

GENEVIEVE

It also has the great advantage of spreading a smell of garlic along the whole French frontier. Is that a herring that you are cooking there?

PIETRI

No, it is my coffee. You are very full of talk, Mademoiselle.

GENEVIEVE

Perhaps it is because I have had to be so quiet all these last days. I do not know whether I have a special talent for talking with Corsicans or with Customs Offi-

cers, but it is quite true that this morning I feel very conversational.

PIETRI

If you want to do something to please me, perhaps you will be so good as not to swing to and fro on the imaginary line, like that.

GENEVIEVE

On the imaginary line?

PIETRI

We call it that in the Customs. It means the frontier. Can you see it? It is that yellow line which runs right across the room, and on through the buffet and the lavatories. That is the imaginary line.

GENEVIEVE

[*Stepping back.*] Is it dangerous?

PIETRI

I see you are not doing it on purpose. But all day there are a lot of madmen who push their feet under the gate without seeming to think what they are doing and so they manage to get half across the imaginary line. A doctor from Berlin comes to examine them sometimes. I cannot see what pleasure they can take in it. I was once in the Customs in the harbour at Nice, and I can assure you that dipping my feet into the sea was not one of my amusements.

GENEVIEVE

Perhaps you did not like journeys by water.

PIETRI

And journeys by land either. You may believe me or not as you please, but I have never been into Germany. You can come in, as you have got your papers, come in and warm yourself.

GENEVIEVE

[*Coming in and sitting near the stove.*] Has your stove kept alight all night?

PIETRI

Alight? I should think so. This is not local coal. The Customs know what's what. They have it sent from the South of France.

GENEVIEVE

Would not you sooner have central heating, as they now have on the other side?

PIETRI

Tell me, would you sooner have it? Can you warm your hands at their heating? Why, let me tell you that there is not an animal, from the German side of the station, including the stationmaster's dog, as well as the cricket in the buffet, whom I do not have to kick back over the imaginary line twenty times a day.

GENEVIEVE

That makes two systems of heating in the same room. It must astonish the travellers.

PIETRI

The travellers find out that Germany has central heating and France separate heating. I wonder they have not started central smoking for smokers over there. Oh, yes, I know that our company is in a political plot with the parties of the right and with the German side of the station about the idea of putting in radiators; but the day they do that I send in my resignation.

GENEVIEVE

That would be a pity. It must be interesting to be a Customs Officer.

PIETRI

Well, as far as I know it is the only way that has yet been discovered for becoming an Inspector of Customs. Are you taking the eight o'clock train, Mademoiselle?

GENEVIEVE

I hope so, if someone arrives whom I am expecting by the train from Gotha.

PIETRI

Was it because you were impatient, that you wasted your time by talking to me?

GENEVIEVE

I have not wasted my time. You cannot imagine what strength it has given me to hear someone speak once more about first-class pensions, about games of

manille and about garlic. For a French body, it is like a dose of oxygen.

PIETRI

We said nothing about games of manille.

GENEVIEVE

Oh, yes, it was part of the whole thing. In any case it has made me hungry and thirsty to hear you speak of apéritifs.

PIETRI

We said nothing at all about apéritifs.

GENEVIEVE

That is odd. I had an idea that we had been talking about nothing else. Yes, for the first time in the last three days, I am hungry. Hungry for mushroom and roast chicken.

PIETRI

[*Gruffly.*] The German buffet is open. They make a specialty of bread-crumb sausages flavoured with caraway seed.

[*The* GERMAN CUSTOMS OFFICER *comes in and hurriedly dusts a leather seat.*] Guten tag, Schuman.

SCHUMAN

Bonchour, Pietri.

PIETRI

I thought it was understood that each one of us would dust his side of the hall by working outwards

from the imaginary line. You might keep your dust for your own country.

SCHUMAN

Excuse.

PIETRI

Who are those two men in cloaks who are walking up and down your platform? I warn you that I shall search them. As it is the New Year all the travellers try to get past with toys. It was only yesterday that I lifted two complete meccano sets from one of your nuns. I am convinced that those two have got their pockets full of steam tops.

SCHUMAN

You won't have a chance. They are two generals who have arrived by a special train in order to get here before the train from Gotha. They are waiting for somebody.

[GENEVIEVE *sees the two generals and rapidly goes into the German buffet.*]

PIETRI

Why don't you shut your gate, Mademoiselle? [*He sneezes.*] People will not understand what a draught an open frontier gate can be to anyone who is in the Customs.

[LEDINGER *and* WALDORF *come in, preceded by* SCHUMAN, *who bows obsequiously.*]

WALDORF

Will he come this way?

SCHUMAN

All the travellers going to France come this way, Excellency. His train is just arriving. Have the Excellencies any orders to give?

WALDORF

We are going back to Gotha by the first express. You will reserve our seats for us.

SCHUMAN

Certainly, Excellency, two seats.

WALDORF

No, three.

[SCHUMAN *goes out.*]

LEDINGER

Was he disguised when he started, Waldorf?

WALDORF

No, he merely put on black clothes—mourning for himself. It must be a sad sight against the snow.

LEDINGER

Is that woman with him?

WALDORF

They did not see each other again. She disappeared a few hours before he did. He started alone without any luggage.

LEDINGER

He tore up a certain quantity of papers, I was told.

WALDORF

Nothing important. Merely his free pass into the German museums and his half-price vouchers for the Opera and for rowing on the Bavarian lakes. That makes a number of beautiful things for which in future he will have to pay the full price.

LEDINGER

Did he leave no letter?

WALDORF

Yes, two. One for the tax collector. He paid him everything that he owed up to yesterday's date. The other was for the town. In it he left all he possessed to public charities. A complete death, is it not, Ledinger?

LEDINGER

Here comes the dead man.

[*They have risen and face the door.* SIEGFRIED *comes in, sees them and stops.*]

WALDORF

Good morning, Excellency.

SIEGFRIED

Good morning, Waldorf. Is it to say good-bye to me that you have come so far?

WALDORF

No, Excellency.

SIEGFRIED

Is it to put me back where Germany found me, in the cradle of my German life, in a railway station?

WALDORF

No, Excellency.

SIEGFRIED

Is it to hold me back, to take me away with you?

WALDORF

Yes.

LEDINGER

[*Advancing a little.*] We have come to beg you, my dear Siegfried, to reconsider your decision.

SIEGFRIED

Have I had anything to decide?

WALDORF

The choice of your country.

SIEGFRIED

That decision was taken the day when I was born.

LEDINGER

You have had two births, Siegfried.

SIEGFRIED

Births are like deaths. The first is the real one.

LEDINGER

Time presses, Siegfried. The train will be going soon.

SIEGFRIED

Exactly. [LEDINGER *makes an impulsive movement towards* SIEGFRIED.] What is the matter, my dear Ledinger?

LEDINGER

Come back with us, my friend. You are suffering, you have grown thinner. Come back.

SIEGFRIED

Yes, I have grown thinner, Ledinger. But it is not only the greatness of what I have lost, but the greatness of what I have won which has made me suffer during these last few days. A man who is convalescent, as I am, should have been given a tiny country instead of a big one. But when a man has at the same moment been deprived of Germany and given France, he could only remain unshaken if all the laws of stability were reversed. I will confess that two days ago I was thinking of disappearing altogether, of seeking shelter in a third country, a country which I should have preferred as far as possible to have no neighbours, no enemies, no consecration of memorials to the dead, no dead. A country without a war in the past, or war in the future. But the more I looked for such a country on the map, the more did my bonds tighten, the more strongly did I feel that I was bound to the nations which suffer and need care, and the more clearly did I see what my mission was.

WALDORF

What is this mission?

SIEGFRIED

Simply that of the civil servant. I belong to the country of civil servants. My mission is to serve.

WALDORF

It is the motto of all those who like to command. Germany is the only country where a man can command well.

SIEGFRIED

To serve my country.

LEDINGER

If what you want is to serve, our friend, come back with us. Germany is the only country where a man can serve well. It is the only country in the world where obedience and respect and discipline still show the enthusiasm of ideas that are not yet old. The smallest hint is all that is necessary to give to our fatherland new sources of strength, and that pitiless kind of virginity which justifies both cruelty and sacrifice. Every ounce of nourishment that is given to the State makes Germany grow like a healthy baby grows when it is given phosphatine. In Germany, the servant of the State has only to say a word for our rivers, instead of all flowing towards the North, to become the most useful of canals cutting diagonally across Germany, or for sixty millions of faces to be turned either towards the East or towards the West, or for new

ideas of honour or dishonour to be established. To leave the service of Germany for that of another people is for a tiller of the soil to give up the ground where plants grow in a day for one in which they only flower once in a hundred years. If you like to see the fruit of your labour, do not give up Germany, and above all not in order to serve France.

SIEGFRIED

Is it difficult to serve France?

LEDINGER

For one who would like to mould the soul of a country, to knead its future, the thing is impossible.

SIEGFRIED

Why, Ledinger?

LEDINGER

France is in the special position of having so clear a destiny that it is only when he is carried away by the wildest illusions that a man can believe that he can lead her, and it is only by being a hypocrite that he can make her people believe that they are being led. It is the only country in the world whose future seems always strictly to balance her past. The direction which is taken by her institutions, by her rivers and by her race, has so long been determined that the words of command of patriotism are no longer given to the French by the voices of their leaders, but by inner voices, like true commandments. What could you do

in that country, where there is no room for any improvements in her public health or in her laws except the merest details? France is served by her artisans, her writers, her engineers, her engravers. She is served by her miniaturists, for it is hardly possible to serve her now in any other way than by adorning her, and there are not many square inches left to adorn. But the rapid succession of Governments which follow one another once a year, or even once a month, as if in a ritual, is enough to prove that her best statesmen have never any other ambition than to do deputy for another pilot, who is invisible and silent.

SIEGFRIED

I shall serve her, nevertheless. I have quite a taste for gardening.

WALDORF

Is that your last word, Excellency?

SIEGFRIED

It is the last word that I can speak as an Excellency. [*There is a pause.*]

WALDORF

Very well, Siegfried. There is nothing left for us, but to bow to your decision; but in return, we must demand a sacrifice of you. Can I speak? [SIEGFRIED *makes a gesture of agreement.*] You are now close to the frontier of another country; but the German people thinks that you are still in the centre of Germany.

Our postal service is full of letters, which are trying to reach you. Your name is at the centre of every German heart. We think that it would be a crime to destroy the work that you have yourself accomplished, to tell this people, which has placed its trust in you, that you no longer exist as far as it is concerned, and that you have abandoned it.

SIEGFRIED

I understand. You prefer to tell the people that I no longer exist as far as anyone is concerned.

WALDORF

Would it not be a more useful and finer thing that you should go out of the world of Germany as you were born into it? Beware lest amazement and disillusion, and even perhaps a scandal which would be most injurious to both countries, should replace the love which today we all have for you. All that is necessary is that Ledinger and I should report that we saw you wounded the other night in the part of the town which was burning, and that you fell into the flames.

SIEGFRIED

Is that your opinion, Ledinger?

LEDINGER

Yes, Excellency.

SIEGFRIED

Would that surprise nobody? Is the remedy not worse than the disease?

LEDINGER

By no means. There is no event for which men in general are more fully prepared than the death of one of their great men. Their imagination staggers that the comrade by whose side they were eating a sausage last night should have departed from this life. But the death of their greatest scientist or of their greatest general is for those who loved him merely a proof of his divine and intangible nature and for those who did not love him it is a flattery.

SIEGFRIED

I detest flattery, so Siegfried must go on living.

LEDINGER

Believe what Waldorf says, Excellency. He is right. My only suggestion would be to adopt another kind of death which would not attach your name too closely to politics. The glory of Siegfried must be above party. I should prefer an accidental death, a fall into a river or better still into one of those lakes which are so transparent, but in which, however, nothing is ever found.

SIEGFRIED

You are generous, my friends. You offer me a heroic death. I can choose which it is to be. I can die like a phoenix in a fire at a charity bazaar. I can die in the manner of the heroes of our romantic literature, in one of those ponds, which by the way are frozen just now, but towards which Ledinger is pushing me with sympathetic hands. You offer me a death with a prize at-

tached to it, a prize rarely given to the dead, for it is life. Well, I cannot accept. There would be a full-length statue in Munich for Siegfried, and a broken column in Paris for Forestier. I should really be too useless between these dead bodies.

LEDINGER

Would you sooner live between two shadows?

SIEGFRIED

I shall merely live. Siegfried and Forestier will live side by side. I shall try to answer to the two names without dishonour, and to bear the two fates which chance has given me. A human life is not like a worm: You cannot simply cut it in two and be sure that each part will become a complete existence. There cannot be any sufferings so opposed to one another, any experiences which are so much each other's enemies, that they cannot melt some day into a single life; for the heart of man is after all the most powerful crucible in the world. Perhaps, before long, this memory that has been broken, these two countries lost and found again, this buried consciousness and this new consciousness which I suffer and enjoy at one and the same time—perhaps before long they will make a coherent fabric and a single life. It would be too much that in a human soul, where the most opposite vices and virtues can live side by side, the word German and the word French were to be the only ones which would refuse to come to an arrangement. As for me, I refuse to dig a line of trenches

in the middle of my soul. I shall go back to France not as the last prisoner released from German camps and jails but as the first to have taken advantage of a new kind of knowledge or of a new kind of heart. Good-bye. There is the whistle of your train. Siegfried and Forestier wish you Godspeed.

WALDORF

Good-bye, Siegfried, and good luck. But it is hard for us to see the man who wanted to ruin Germany and the man who saved her taking the same train one day after the other and going towards the same place of refuge.

SIEGFRIED

I am the less to be commiserated of the two, Waldorf. My land of exile is my own country.

LEDINGER

Good-bye, Siegfried, and good luck. Think of the mask which all the French wear, the mask which keeps them from breathing the harmful gases of the rest of Europe, but which also prevents them very often from having pure air and a long sight.

SIEGFRIED

I shall be the clean-shaven Frenchmân. That will balance my having been the German without a memory.

[*The generals bow and go out. Left alone,* SIEGFRIED *walks without thinking towards the French side of the station, and goes through the little gate without notic-*

ing what he is doing. The CUSTOMS OFFICER *sitting at his desk shouts after him.*]

PIETRI

Hallo, you there.

SIEGFRIED

You are calling me?

PIETRI

What are you doing here?

SIEGFRIED

What do you mean here?

PIETRI

What are you doing in France?

SIEGFRIED

Ah, in France—

PIETRI

Can't you see the yellow line under the gate? That is the frontier.

SIEGFRIED

Have I passed it?

PIETRI

Yes, pass back.

SIEGFRIED

As it happens I am going into France. I have all my papers.

PIETRI

You can come into France at seven thirty-four. Now it is only seven sixteen.

[*As* SIEGFRIED *goes out of the little gate he makes a gesture towards the warmth of the stove.*]

PIETRI

[*Softening.*] Was it to warm your hands or to come into France that you crossed on to my side?

SIEGFRIED

Why?

PIETRI

You can warm yourself by leaning over the counter. I have no objections to your hands being in France.

SIEGFRIED

Thank you. [*As he is leaning on the counter and warming his hands, his eyes are attracted by the landscape which the dawn is revealing through the window of the waiting-room.*] Is that the first French town that one can see there?

PIETRI

Yes, it is the village.

SIEGFRIED

Is it big?

PIETRI

Same as every village; eight hundred and thirty-one inhabitants.

SIEGFRIED

What is it called?

PIETRI

Same as every village; Blancmesnil sur Audinet.

SIEGFRIED

What a fine church. What a pretty white house.

PIETRI

That is the mairie.

SIEGFRIED

And that statue in bronze at the end of the little row of lime trees? Is that Louis XIV?

PIETRI

No, it's Gambetta. You can look after your heavy luggage now. It's about time. I am going there.

SIEGFRIED

I have no heavy luggage.

PIETRI

You have sent it on ahead?

SIEGFRIED

Yes, seven years ahead.

PIETRI

Seven years! Oh, then it's no longer a matter for the Customs. It will be in the lost luggage department.

[PIETRI *goes out towards the luggage-room.* GENEVIEVE *comes in from the German refreshment-room.*]

SIEGFRIED

What are you doing in this station, Genevieve?

GENEVIEVE

I was looking for someone.

SIEGFRIED

The one for whom you are looking is not here, Genevieve.

GENEVIEVE

Don't you believe that. He is here, when I am here— You seem to be surprised to see that I am not sad today, that I am almost merry. The fact is that the being who, according to you is invisible and dumb, is here. I can see him. I can hear him.

SIEGFRIED

Why did you follow me?

GENEVIEVE

I have followed you since the day before yesterday, Jacques. I took a room opposite to your room. I saw you from my window all night. You did not sleep much.

SIEGFRIED

Jacques slept. Siegfried stayed awake.

GENEVIEVE

You were on your balcony until the dawn. It was rash of you, when it was so cold. I did not dare to wave you to go in. It seemed to me that you were holding a conversation with someone who was invisible, with someone who was dumb, with the German night perhaps.

SIEGFRIED

I thought I was alone with her.

GENEVIEVE

No, I saw it all. When the snow began falling, you stayed there. You were all over white. You stretched out your hands towards the snow. Your hands were already covered by her. Looking at the night and caressing the snow seems to be a strange way of saying good-bye to Germany.

SIEGFRIED

It was the part of my good-bye which was the greatest wrench all the same. The last and most eloquent appeals of this country came to me from this very snow which covers all continents, from these stars unchanged for the whole of Europe, and from this torrent of voices which are as Latin as they are German. Over the whole of this landscape where the dead and the living were all asleep, and where the statues alone pierced the pale winding sheet, there was a rhythm in the wind, a balance in the patches of light, and a whole nocturnal consciousness, from which I could hardly tear myself away. The great men of a country, its history and its habits, almost form a language, which all the people of the world can understand; while the precise angle at which the rays of the moon fall upon her surface makes a beauty which no one can take away from her. So true did I feel that to be, that when the night paled yesterday morning, it was my past that grew paler with it. It seemed to me that I had made my true farewell, and I was ready.

GENEVIEVE

It comforts me to hear that, Jacques. I had feared so much for a more terrible conflict in your heart. I saw a struggle within you of every virtue and every glory of what had been for a short time your country and what was your country once more. I had sworn to myself that I would keep silent. I should always have hated to pass a sword surreptitiously to any duelist, even if he had been Bayard or Napoleon. But if it is a question of a duel between dawns and twilights, a competition between torrents and moons, then I feel myself freed from all scruples.

SIEGFRIED

Why did you follow me?

GENEVIEVE

Why did you run away from me, Jacques? You could not have thought that I should let you come back to France without returning to you all that I had of yours, all that charge of your recollections and your habits which you entrusted to my memory and which I had kept faithfully, or that I would have let you walk into your new life like a blind man. Siegfried is safe. We must look after Forestier, now. He is the one who must be re-created. Put yourself in my hands. Do not be afraid that I shall make an artificial man, as Eva did, a man invented by my friendship. I know everything about you, Jacques was very talkative.

SIEGFRIED

You are undertaking a very long task.

GENEVIEVE

Very long? It is seven eighteen. We leave at seven thirty-four. That gives me more time than I need to give you back all your original virtues on the threshold of your life.

SIEGFRIED

My virtues! And what about my faults?

GENEVIEVE

Those will come back without my help. All you will need is to live with someone whom you used to love—No, believe me, I should not like to see you unable to answer if a French Customs Officer stopped you, a rather curious Customs Officer, and he were to ask you whether you were brave, whether you were a spend-thrift, or what dishes you liked best. As for that awkward look that you have got now, the look of a horseman on a mount whose tricks he does not know, that look must disappear this very day. Come nearer, Jacques. I will give you the key to all the little secrets which you have not yet been able to understand. [*She sits on the seat and draws him to her.*] Come nearer. Nothing in Jacques has changed. Everyone of your eyelashes has kept its place miraculously on the edge of your eyelids. Even in my time, before you had been through so many troubles, your lips already had that twist, which is at once gentle and bitter, a twist which is indeed given by pleasure. Perhaps it is to joy

that you owe every sign upon you, which you believe to be the mark of misfortune. That scar which you have on your forehead did not come to you from the war but from a fall when you were bicycling with friends in the country. Even your gestures are older than you think they are. If you sometimes lift your hand to your neck, it is because in those days you used to wear a tie in a sailor's knot and you were constantly tightening it up. Do not believe either that the nervous tic in your right eye comes from your sufferings or your doubts. You got it by wearing a single eyeglass in spite of my advice. By the way, before leaving Gotha, I bought a cravat to tie in a knot. I want you to put it on.

SIEGFRIED

The Customs Officer is looking at us.

GENEVIEVE

You were bold and brave, but you were always afraid of Customs Officers who looked, of neighbours who listened. It is not Germany which has made you so prudent and so suspicious. When you used to row me in a boat on the Marne, and we used to talk without stopping, the sight of the distant hat of a fisherman was enough to make you row on in silence.

SIEGFRIED

Row? Do I know how to row?

GENEVIEVE

You know how to row, and you know how to swim, and you know how to dive. I once saw you dive for a whole minute. You did not come up and it seemed like a century. There you are, you see, I give you back an element which was yours. Whenever we meet a river, you will now have your old assurance with regard to it. It was you who took me to the sea for the first time. It seemed immense and rather sinister. Its calm seemed threatening. But I was without fear. I was close to you. Have you ever seen it again?

SIEGFRIED

No.

GENEVIEVE

And mountains! You have no idea how easily you can climb mountains. At every rock you used to relieve me of some parcel or of some cloak. You always arrived at the top laden with bags and umbrellas and coats and I with nothing at all.

[*There is a pause.*]

SIEGFRIED

Where did I meet you?

GENEVIEVE

At the corner of a street, near a river.

SIEGFRIED

No doubt it was raining. I offered you an umbrella, Genevieve, as they do in Paris.

GENEVIEVE

No, it was fine. It was a most gorgeous sunshine. Perhaps you thought that I needed to be protected against that inhuman sky, those rays of light and that beauty. I allowed you to accompany me. We walked along the bank of the Seine. During every minute of that day, I was discovering you, as you are discovering yourself now. By the evening I knew what musicians you preferred, what wines and what authors, and whom you had already loved. I will tell you that also if you like. The next day we went out again, almost along the same route, but in your motor car. I was getting ready to take the same route every day of my life, but ten times as quick each day.

SIEGFRIED

My motor car! Do I know how to drive?

GENEVIEVE

You know how to drive. You know how to dance. What is there that you do not know? You know how to be happy.

[*There is a pause.*]

SIEGFRIED

Did I love you?

GENEVIEVE

Only you knew that. I was counting on your first leave to find out myself.

[*A pause.*]

SIEGFRIED

Were we only fiancés, Genevieve!

GENEVIEVE

No. Lovers. [*He rises.*] You know how to be cruel. You know how to deceive. You know how to fill a whole soul with a word. You know how to kill a whole day of hope with another word. None of those are very special talents for a man, you see. You also know—even with your wonderful memory—how to forget. You know how to be false. [*He goes towards her.*]

SIEGFRIED

I know how to take you like this.

GENEVIEVE

The Customs Officer is listening to us. That's right. Pull your tie.

SIEGFRIED

Do I know how to enclose you in my arms?

GENEVIEVE

Ah, Jacques. In the country of love and friendship, the impulse which you feel rising from your depths towards the future—that impulse is your true past. Come towards that country without hesitation and without scruple.

SIEGFRIED

Did I know how to please you? How to speak to you?

GENEVIEVE

You spoke to me of my own past. You were jealous of it. You did not believe me. I was the Forestier of that time.

[*There is a pause.*]

SIEGFRIED

[*Holding* GENEVIEVE *in his arms.*] Who are you, Genevieve?

GENEVIEVE

What did you say, Jacques?

SIEGFRIED

Who are you? Why are you smiling?

GENEVIEVE

I am smiling?

SIEGFRIED

Why those tears?

GENEVIEVE

Because I know that Jacques is coming back. I am sure of it now. Who am I? So your demon has at last dropped his own trail to follow another. You are saved. A past? Ah, Jacques do not go on trying to find one for either of us. Have not we both found a new one? It is only three days old, but happy are those who have a past which is as fresh. This past of three days has already made the one of ten years disappear for me. It is in this past that in future all my thoughts will seek their joy or their sadness. Do you remember the day

you came up to me and clicked your heels together to introduce yourself? Do you put iron into your shoes to make them make that noise, or is it the Germans themselves that sound like steel? How far away all that is, but how clearly I see it. You drew out of your pocket a beautiful salmon and green handkerchief to make an impression on that Canadian girl. Will you pretend that you have forgotten all that?

SIEGFRIED

No. I remember.

GENEVIEVE

Do you remember our lessons, and how nasty you were about the snow? And all your cruel irony about my farmer's dress?

SIEGFRIED

I remember. You had put on a pearl grey hat with a mouse grey ribbon; and all to fascinate that German.

GENEVIEVE

Did I please him?

SIEGFRIED

Do you remember my sudden return before the riot? And our farewells? And the umbrella which I came back to fetch against anxiety and despair? How they both rained, Genevieve!

GENEVIEVE

What a grand wood fire we will light this evening to dry ourselves.

[*The station bell rings.*]

SIEGFRIED

There is the train. We must go. Go through first, Genevieve.

GENEVIEVE

Not yet.

SIEGFRIED

But it is the German signal for shutting the doors.

GENEVIEVE

It is only the French signal for hooking the white horse to the turntable. I have a word to say to you.

SIEGFRIED

You shall say it over there.

GENEVIEVE

No. It is on this side of the imaginary line that I must say it. Do you remember, you who remember everything, that I have not yet called you by your German name?

SIEGFRIED

My German name?

GENEVIEVE

Yes. I swore to myself that I would never say it—that torture should never make it pass my lips.

SIEGFRIED

You were wrong. It is a fine name. Well then?

GENEVIEVE

Well then? Come nearer. Come right through the gate.

SIEGFRIED

Here I am.

GENEVIEVE

Do you hear me, Jacques?

SIEGFRIED

Jacques hears you.

GENEVIEVE

Siegfried.

SIEGFRIED

Why Siegfried?

GENEVIEVE

Siegfried, I love you.

CURTAIN